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THE AIM OF LIFE

PHILIP S. MOXOM

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PLAIN TALKS TO YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

BY

PHILIP STAFFORD MOXOM

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TO
MY FATHER AND MOTHER

P R E F A C E.

THIS little volume is composed of addresses which were delivered to audiences, mainly of young people, in Cleveland and Boston. I have deemed it best not to change their style, but to send them forth as they were spoken. The simple directness of counsel and appeal which marks them as addresses will aid rather than hinder their usefulness.

To myself all of these addresses are fragrant with tender and ineffaceable memories of the many young people for whom they were first written, and freighted with warm affection for the many other young people to whom they were last spoken. In the love and sympathy of all these responsive hearers, I have found continual comfort and inspiration in my work.

BOSTON, 1893.

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THE AIM OF LIFE.

THAT life is long which answers life's great end. — YOUNG.

Life's but a means unto an end; that end,
Beginning, mean, and end to all things, — God. — BAILEY.

Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st
Live well; how long or short permit to heaven. — MILTON.

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole
duty of man. — ECCLESIASTES.

Life is a mission. Every other definition of life is false, and
leads all who accept it astray. Religion, science, philosophy,
though still at variance upon many points, all agree in this, —
that every existence is an aim. — MAZZINI.

Love not pleasure; love God. This is the Everlasting Yea
wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and
works, it is well with him. — CARLYLE.

IT is the high distinction of man that he is
capable of living with an aim, — that is, with
a purpose which, reaching through all his life,
unifies it, and gives it directness and force. An
aim in life is impossible to creatures that have
not reason. It would be impossible to man if
he were an automaton, — if he were not a
rational, free personality, having duty and a
destiny. There is, then, a singular abdication

of his real dignity by the man whose life is without purpose; and there is no more serious and important matter for the young to consider than just this one of life's aim. It is important because it intimately concerns success, and, still more, because it concerns the formation and development of character.

I wish you to think of this whole subject with a new seriousness and force. Life is tremendous in its possibilities. More than half the battle for true success is won in beginning right. I do not ask now, what is *your* aim in life? That question we shall mutually consider a little later. Let us first think about the general question.

The aim of life includes both an object or end toward which the life moves, and a purpose which impels to that end. By this phrase I now mean the supreme object and the ruling purpose of life. One may have many minor and subordinate aims; he can have but one supreme aim, and from this supreme aim all the others take their real character. Our aim in life is that object or end which draws to itself our highest thought and aspiration and endeavor; and it is that purpose which, consciously or unconsciously, makes the strong mid-current in the stream of our activity that ever moves onward, however many may be the

eddies and transient back-currents that perplex the stream's margin. The aim of life is that which creates life's tendency, and supremely determines conduct.

The real aim of life, let me remind you, is not always the apparent aim; for men are often self-deceived as to their chief end, and often others are deceived by them. But conduct, in the long run, must be consistent with our ruling purpose, for it is this which qualifies and directs conduct. What you are supremely living for determines the course you are taking year in and year out. For example, there are two main directions either of which your life may pursue: one is toward the good; the other is toward the evil. A stone thrown from the hand goes up or down; it never keeps a horizontal line. Gravitation pulls it toward the earth; the moment it leaves the hand gravitation begins to overcome the upward propulsion and at last is completely victorious. The track of the stone is a curve the farther end of which rests on the ground. In the realm of the moral life there are only two tendencies and directions, upward and downward, — the gravitation toward the evil, and the attraction or propulsion toward the good. You can find in God's universe no neutral course for a moral being. There may

be confusing oscillations in a life's tendency, — it may at some point describe a crooked and uncertain path; but as a whole it has a definite trend this way or that. The definite trend of your life discovers your real aim; you cannot disguise it except transiently. It is not something outside of you, compelling you this way or that; it is *you*, — the complex of your generic choices and volitions.

I dwell on this because it is one of those trite yet tremendous truths which so many forget or ignore, and which has such vital consequences in the destiny of the soul. Always you are moving somewhither, always you are becoming somewhat; and the direction which you are now taking, the character which you are now forming, becoming fixed, the success or failure of your life is unchangeably determined.

That is the most critical moment in your experience when you consciously and deliberately ask: "Whither am I going; what am I becoming in thought and feeling and character?"

Then, if ever, is the choice made, the purpose formed, which henceforth makes your life-story easy to read. Many young people step upon the threshold of responsible life, and amid the multitude of eager self-questionings that rise in their hearts the one chief question scarcely

appears. They ask, "How can I best earn a living? What trade or profession shall I learn? What business shall I follow? How can I get an education? How can I secure pleasure? How can I make a fortune?" But deeper than all these is the one question that gives meaning to all the rest: "*What am I living for?*" What shall be the supreme purpose and result of my life?"

The thoughts that I wish to present to you now gather themselves naturally about three simple propositions:—

1. The first of these is: *Every one ought consciously to have an aim in life.* Whether he is conscious of it or not, every one has a ruling tendency; but every one should have a controlling and persistent purpose in life. No one has a right to live aimlessly, for no one has a right to abandon reason and self-control, and consent to be a mere waif drifting hither and thither like some plaything of the winds. We are endowed with powers that make us capable of good and often great achievement. We are gifted with reason and conscience and will, in order that we may both become and do that which is noble and beneficent.

"For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,"

if they live without any purpose that is essentially higher than the instincts which prompt them to eat and sleep and propagate their kind? In the mythology of the Greeks, Phaethon, an earthly son of Helios, aspired to drive the flaming chariot of the sun. The task was beyond his human powers, and his disastrous rashness was expiated by his death by a bolt hurled from the hand of Zeus; but the Naiads, who buried him, wrote in his epitaph: —

“ He could not rule his father’s car of fire ;
Yet was it much so nobly to aspire.”

He is not worthy to live who only vegetates ; he does not truly live who drifts aimlessly through the years from youth to age. Indeed, he whose aim is even lower than the highest, less than the greatest, is nobler than he who has no conscious purpose in life.

But, besides being ignoble, a purposeless life is inefficient; to aim at nothing is to hit nothing. The cannon-ball strikes somewhere, indeed, though the cannon be fired at random. So each of us is moving toward some end, though that end, undetermined by choice and rational endeavor, demonstrates the futility and failure of a life. Each soul should be, not the missile aimlessly flung upon destiny by external

forces, — not the ball that flies wildly to an unperceived mark, — but the gunner that aims his piece, or rather, as if he were gunner and ball in one, and with conscious purpose and inherent propulsive force, speed onward to a definite goal. Many a man falls short of that at which he aimed, and some men attain more or other than the specific object which they sought; but no one who has lived with a purpose has failed of a certain efficiency. The dreary and desert hell of utter failure is reserved for the soul that has not lived, but existed without aim.

Of first importance, then, in the consideration of the question as to what your life shall be, is the fact that you cannot avoid moving toward some end, good or bad, and that it is your duty to move consciously in the line of a clearly defined purpose.

2. The second proposition that I would present to you is: *The supreme aim of life should be consonant with the nature and capabilities of the whole man.* The chief end sought should be such as to bring to their highest development all our powers, mental and spiritual. It should be comprehensive enough to include all right temporal ends, and of such moral excellence and attractive force as to subordinate to itself in

complete harmony all the limitless detail of our daily choices, plans, and endeavors.

It is a principle of practical ethics that every man should aim to do some one thing in this world supremely well; and in order to attain the highest efficiency, it is necessary that each should do that for which, by temperament and training, he is best fitted. There is a natural division of labor indicated by natural aptitudes: one man is born with a special aptitude for trade, another for invention, another for teaching, another for mechanics, another for persuasion and argument. No man can do all things, or even many things, equally well; efficiency inexorably demands concentration of effort. Definiteness of aim in life's work is a chief factor in successful achievement. Aimless effort is fruitless effort, save as it is fruitful in mischief, like the action of an idiot or a madman. History and experience abound in illustrations of this truth. The failure of many a business man is clearly traceable to his lack of concentration upon some one line. The manufacturer who dabbles in stocks, and cultivates margins in oil and wheat, will, as the rule, soon find himself with a depreciated credit and a short account at the bank. The majority of men, if they would succeed, must be content to do one thing and to do that with all their might.

If you are fitted to be a mechanic, be a mechanic, and such a mechanic that those about you will find your services indispensable. If you are fitted to make shoes, make shoes, and such shoes as all the world will wish to walk in. If you are fitted to be a farmer, be a farmer, and with such assiduity and skill that the earth will give to you as to a master the meed of her most abundant harvests. Be artisan, be engineer, be merchant, be lawyer, be physician, be teacher, be artist, be poet, be a worker, a producer of values, a true servant of your fellow-men, — and, whatever you do, do that with all your energy; only thus can you hope to attain any temporal success worth having.

But, remember, the main business of life is not to do, but to become; and action itself has its finest and most enduring fruit in character.

All these ends in the sphere of utility are relative; they are not ultimate. No man has a right to be a mere tool, a mere wheel or spindle in the great manufactory of the world; and no man can rest with lasting satisfaction in the achievement of any material end. He whose entire mind is concentrated on some temporal object, who seeks only success in business, or eminence at the bar, or fame in literature, will

find at last that there are capabilities in his nature for which he has not provided. He may reach what he aimed at, — wealth, power, pleasure, fame, — and be, after all, essentially a poor creature. No earthly and selfish pursuit can absorb the whole of a man's thought and desire without doing him irreparable harm. What is more pitiable than a rich man with a little soul, or a learned man with a starved and shrivelled heart? Manhood is of more worth than money; character is more precious than craft or skill. Fulness of being is superior to encyclopædic learning; the graces of gentleness and pity and love are more beautiful than all the accomplishments of art. Integrity and wisdom and chivalrous temper are better than power and fame. To be a capable artisan, a successful salesman, a great financier, an eloquent orator, a brilliant writer, or an accomplished teacher is of much less importance than to be a true, whole man, a true, whole woman. Completeness in life is attained only in the line of some aim which, including any or every temporary end, and giving it worth, reaches beyond earth and time to find its full scope in the eternal life of the soul.

3. Our discussion has prepared us now for the third proposition: The one aim which fulfils

all the conditions of a perfect aim is that indicated in the familiar words, "*Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*" Let us interpret largely, for in religion and morals the large interpretation is always the most likely to be right. "Fear God," — that is, believe in God with the reverence that is the soul of true worship, and the love that is the spring of true obedience. "Fear God and keep His commandments" is the comprehensive formula of practical righteousness, "for," as the wise man pithily adds, "this is the whole duty of man." Here are presented both object and purpose great enough to comprehend the entire range of human aspiration and endeavor. You may think long and carefully and you will not be able to conceive and formulate an aim higher and broader than this.

(1.) It is the highest conceivable, for God is the ultimate Excellence; He is the source and sovereign and goal of life. He is supremely holy; to serve Him perfectly is to become like Him, therefore to attain the highest excellence. He is supremely good, therefore to love Him perfectly is to attain the greatest blessedness. He is supremely wise, therefore to obey Him perfectly is to be in absolute security, and at the same time to be in the realm of absolute

liberty. It is the nature of man to grow like him whom he devotedly serves. God is the absolute ideal of moral beings. The goal of the finite spirit is likeness to the Infinite Spirit and participation in the infinitude of His beauty and power and joy; to aim at less than this is to sink below the noblest and divinest possibility of our nature, which derives its being from Deity.

(2.) This aim is the broadest conceivable, for it includes all that is good. It is consonant with our whole nature; it brings under one perfect law body, mind, and spirit, and thus co-ordinates all our capacities and powers. For God calls a man to be upright and pure and generous, but He also calls him to be intelligent and skilful and strong and brave. You can have no excellence of mind or heart, or of body even, which has not place in the true ideal of godliness. You can have no grace of person, or power of hand and brain, that has not place and use in God's scheme of human life. There is thus the widest scope for a true ambition. There is nothing that it is right to do, and that is worth doing well, but will be done better when the motive does not exhaust itself in the specific achievement, but goes on to God, thus making the achievement a tribute to him. Adam Bede

rightly thought that, " Good carpentry is God's will," and that " scamped work of any sort is a moral abomination ; " and he was wiser than he knew when he said : " I know a man must have the love o' God in his soul, and the Bible's God's word. But what does the Bible say? Why, it says as God put His sperrit into the workman as built the tabernacle, to make him do all the carved work and things as wanted a nice hand. And this is my way o' looking at it : there's the sperrit o' God in all things and all times — week-day as well as Sunday — and i' the great works and inventions, and i' the figuring and the mechanics. And God helps us with our head-pieces and our hands as well as with our souls ; and if a man does bits o' jobs out o' working hours, — builds a oven for 's wife to save her from going to the bakehouse, or scrats at his bit o' garden and makes two potatoes grow instead of one, — he 's doing more good, and he 's just as near to God as if he was running after some preacher and a-praying and a-groaning." There is the best sort of practical theology in these homely phrases. The service of God is not something apart from the daily life ; it is the daily life motived with true piety. Do you covet excellence in any work? Do that work for God, and your motive, purified and spirit-

ualized, will be reinforced by the finest forces in your nature; your aspiration will become inspiration, and you will push your work with a glad enthusiasm.

Commerce, mechanics, statesmanship, literature, and art are all consecrated in the thought of him who works for God. Think you Angelo did not reach nobler results because he carved his own faith in forms of breathing marble, and painted it abroad in the glory of his frescos? Think you Hugh Miller read the story of the rocks less eagerly and carefully because he felt that he was reading the thoughts of God written deep in the strata of the earth? Think you Carey made poorer shoes because while he stitched and hammered at his cobbler's-bench the love of God made melody in his heart, and great schemes of missionary enterprise took shape in his mind? My young friends, the true service of God is so broad, so inspiring, so strong and pure in its motives, that by it all life is lifted to a higher plane. No honest work is sordid when done for Him, and you have no force or faculty of hand or heart which will not find most powerful stimulus and freest play in doing His will.

When all that you do is truly done for God, you escape that bondage in which so many men

labor, — the bondage to the material and temporal. How much work is mere grind in a dull round of days without horizon; how much work indeed, seems linked with peril to our best selves! We are depressed or corrupted by our very labor.

“Nature is subdu’d
To what it works in, like the dyer’s hand.”

There is danger even in achievement; but you may win wealth safely when you win it for God, for then, through you, it becomes ministrant to humanity. You may grasp power without harm when you seek it and wield it for Him; you may covet the magic charm of poetry and art without rebuke when you make it a service of melody and beauty to Him.

All that is good is God’s; and if you are His, all that is good is yours. No toil done in love is drudgery, and the love of God casts a halo around the humblest task.

This highest, broadest aim, the service of God, gives scope for all genuine self-culture, — of body as well as of mind, of mind as well as of spirit. “Godliness is profitable for all things,” said Saint Paul, “having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come,” and “the bodily exercise” which in the preceding line he says “profiteth little,” has no reference to a

sound physical culture, but to the self-maceration of the ascetic, which is pleasing neither to God nor to well instructed man.

Get learning, get skill, get culture, get power ; the more the better, if these are got that you may the more fruitfully serve God. Make the most and the best possible of yourselves for Him ; He is worthy of all that you can win and offer.

“God plants us where we grow,”

and He takes delight in all our attainment.

(3.) Then, again, this aim is open to all, and is attainable by all. You may not be great as the world measures greatness ; but you may be good with the goodness of God, and that is to be great at last, for there is no true greatness that is not goodness. You may not be rich in houses and lands, but you may be rich in knowledge and virtue ; and such riches no fire can burn, and no thief can plunder. You may not be skilful in invention and art, but you may be, which is better, skilful in the art of living patiently and bravely in the midst of trial. You may not have power to move multitudes to your purpose by the spell of genius, but you may have the finer power of giving comfort to many a troubled heart, and healing the hurts of sorrow and sin. This you may have, the joy

of living purely and helpfully, and of seeing in every vicissitude of life the guiding hand of your Father, in every flower some gleam of His beauty, in every star a sign of His watchfulness, and in every rainbow that springs its arch over the path of the retreating storm a radiant renewal of His faithful and gracious promise.

Through misfortune you may fail in business, but, loving God, you cannot fail of life's true crown. You may be assailed by the envy or hate of men who misunderstand you; you cannot be hindered from possessing an impregnable peace. If you aim supremely at worldly success, and fail, your failure leaves you poor indeed; but if you aim only to do the will of God, no earthly loss can impoverish you, and death will but usher you into habitations which God's hand has builded and no shock of disaster can destroy.

Here, then, is an aim in life which draws the soul upward and not downward, which is so broad as to give scope to every power of your nature, and which is attainable by all who seek. What do you think of it? You are beginning, or have just begun, the serious business of life; your heads are full of plans, and your hearts are full of wishes and hopes and fears. Some of you look forward with buoyant spirits to the prize

which you covet. Some of you, perhaps, are beset by anxious forebodings; the struggle for bread makes the day dingy and the future dark. Some, it may be, have little thought or care for to-morrow, so that to-day be pleasant. Life is God's precious gift to you; what will you do with it? Now your ideals are forming; now you are shaping that conception of life which will rule all your future action. Nobility of thought and aspiration is natural to the young heart. Most young men have a native capacity for chivalry and uprightness; a sordid and selfish youth, a youth without generous impulses and pure aspirations, shocks us as something abnormal and monstrous. Says Theodore Munger: "There is no misfortune comparable to a youth without a sense of nobility. Better be born blind than not to see the glory of life." The *blasé* voluptuary, the worn-out slave of avarice, the misanthrope whose pessimism is the reflection of his own unloving and distrustful spirit, may declaim against life as not worth living; but you, to whom life is God's fresh gift, have better thoughts, — thoughts distilled from an honored father's counsels, a loving mother's prayers. To you life, though it is still vague, is sweet and full of promise; what will you do with it? At the beginning of the

journey, whither are you going; what is your aim? Forget my voice and listen to the voice of God speaking inarticulately yet intelligibly in your heart and to your conscience. That voice is commanding you to a purpose and aim, and inviting you to a service which welcomed and accepted will make your life pure, beautiful, and divine.

“A sacred burden is this life ye bear:
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly,
Stand up and walk beneath it steadfastly.
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin;
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.”

CHARACTER.

CHARACTER is properly educated will. — NOVALIS.

Character makes its own destiny. — MRS. CAMPBELL PRAED.

Character is the diamond that scratches every other stone.
— BARTOL.

What the superior man seeks is in himself; what the small man seeks is in others. — CONFUCIUS.

Character is the moral order seen through the medium of an individual nature. — EMERSON.

Everything that happens to us leaves some trace behind; everything contributes imperceptibly to make us what we are.
— GOETHE.

The evil bow before the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. — *Proverbs of Solomon*.

Look, as I blow this feather from my face,
And as the air blows it to me again,
Obeying with my wind when I do blow,
And yielding to another when it blows,
Commanded always by the greater gust;
Such is the lightness of you common men.

SHAKESPEARE.

CHARACTER is a very different thing from reputation, though often the two are confounded. Reputation is what a man is thought to be; character is what a man is. The one is opinion; the other is fact. Circumstances and

associations, or even artful management, may give one for a time a fictitious reputation; but his character is himself, and that at last makes his real reputation. A man may be honestly indifferent to reputation; but he cannot be honestly indifferent to character. The former may affect his temporal condition; but the latter determines his destiny.

The word "character" is a Greek word, as many of our best words are, and is transferred, not translated, into our English speech. The verb *χαράσσω*, by softening the hard guttural and dropping the final vowel, becomes our English "harass," and means: (1) *to make sharp or pointed, to whet*, and, metaphorically used, *to exasperate, to irritate*; (2) *to furrow or scratch*; (3) *to engrave, or to stamp*, as in minting a coin. *χαρακτήρ*, which is only the Greek form of our English "character," means *that which is cut in or marked*, as the impress or stamp on coins, seals, etc. Thus, it comes to mean that which reveals or expresses the quality of a thing or a person. A small, round, flat piece of gold is put into the stamping machine in the mint, and that part of the machine called the "die" strikes it, leaving an impress, — as, for example, the figure of an eagle with an encircling legend, — and that impress is the *character* of the

piece; it tells what the piece is and declares its worth.

Our English word "type" has a similar origin. It came from the Greek verb τύπτω, which means *to strike*, whence the noun τύπος, *type*, which means first, *a blow*, and then, *an impression or mark* which is the result of a blow.

This simple lesson in etymology will help you to a clear idea of what character means. Your character is the mark or impress on you that declares your real quality and worth. That is, your character is what you are in moral quality; for, because man is pre-eminently a moral being, this word, "character," has taken to itself an almost exclusively moral significance.

You see, then, the inseparableness of character from self. If you would have a good character you must be good. If you are bad, no matter what others think of you, your character is bad; you cannot escape from your character. A man may run away from a bad reputation, for that is something outside of himself; he can never run away from a bad character, for that is himself. A man's reputation is like his shadow, which, according as the sun is high or low, may be longer or shorter than himself, or may even disappear altogether, as when the sun is at the zenith; but his character is like the color

of his eyes, look which way he will, that is the same. "No change of circumstances," says Emerson, "can repair a defect of character." If your character is evil it can be repaired only by your moral renewal.

Having got now a clear idea of what character is, let us think about the ways and means by which it comes to be good or evil.

1. The first thing to fix in our minds is the truth that character is *formed*. It is not inherited any more than gold when it comes from the mine bears the impress of the minter's "die." You are born with a nature which has certain susceptibilities, and tendencies, or appetencies, but no character. Character is the result of forces, chief among which are your own choices and volitions; you make your own character. You did not choose the lot in which you were born; that was chosen for you. You did not create your temperament; that you inherited from your parents. But what you become is mainly the product of your own will. Wisely and most beneficently has it been ordained for man that

"Himself from God he [can] not free."

Deeper and more vital than the truth that Nature and human life are man's constant environment is the truth that Divinity is man's

environment. But it has been ordained also that man shall, under God, determine his own destiny.

“Men at some time are masters of their fates ;
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.”

Here is a fundamental principle ; it is your prerogative to shape morally your own future. This great and perilous power is the mark of man's true dignity as the creature and child of God ; it is this which separates him so widely from the brutes. A brute, not being moral, can have no character and therefore no destiny ; it eats and sleeps and breeds and dies, and so completes the little circle of its life. But man has conscience, reason, and will, and the possibility of unlimited mental and moral growth ; his expansibility upward is infinite. The body is only his pedestal and instrument ; the bodily functions are the lowest functions of his nature, and they are meant to be entirely subordinate and subsidiary to his intellectual and spiritual life. Though his feet press the earth, his head may touch the stars. In physical equipment man is, indeed, lower than many beasts ; but by his rational and moral endowments he is raised far above all, and so is their master. Reason and will give him a strength greater than that of the

elephant, a swiftness beyond that of the horse, and a skill infinitely surpassing that of the ant and the beaver; while his spiritual nature lifts him out of any real kinship to the beasts. A baby seems to have little more than an animal nature, but quickly it reveals capacities that belong only to a spiritual being capable of knowing God and of participating in His power and wisdom and holiness.

In a word, man is capable of moral character, and this character he creates by the exercise of his moral powers in the various situations and experiences of his life.

But the process of character-formation goes on through the action and inter-action of many forces. The totality of a life, at any moment, is the product mainly of little things. Trifling choices, insignificant exercises of will, unimportant acts often repeated, things seemingly of small account, — these are the thousand tiny sculptors that are carving away constantly at the rude block of life, giving it shape and feature. Indeed the formation of character is much like the work of an artist in stone. The sculptor takes a rough, unshapen mass of marble, and with strong, rapid strokes of mallet and chisel quickly brings into view the rude outline of his design; but after the outline appears, then

come hours, days, perhaps even years, of patient minute labor. A novice might see no change in the statue from one day to the other; for though the chisel touches the stone a thousand times, it touches as lightly as the fall of a rain-drop, but each touch leaves a mark. A friend of Michael Angelo's called on the great artist while he was finishing a statue; some days afterward he called again, and the sculptor was still at the same task. The friend, looking at the statue, exclaimed: —

“Have you been idle since I saw you last?”

“By no means,” replied Angelo. “I have retouched this part, and polished that; I have softened this feature, and brought out this muscle; I have given more expression to this lip, and more energy to this limb.”

“Well, well!” said his friend, “all these are trifles.”

“It may be so,” replied Angelo; “but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle.”

So it is with the shaping of character; each day brings us under the play of innumerable little influences. Every one of these influences does its work for good or ill; and all do their work through our consent. By-and-by appears the full and final result. No character is com-

pleted at once. The general outline may be manifest early in life, but through succeeding years the slow process of filling up that outline goes on, until at last the character stands forth in all its developed beauty or hideousness. It is difficult to trace the process in minute detail. Each day's choices leave their mark on the chooser; to-day's deeds are to-morrow's habits, and the sum of one's habits is his life. What we say has its share in determining what we shall be, for speech has a sure recoil on the speaker. A false word is instantly avenged by its rebound on character; an obscene jest flings back a stain on him who utters it. Our deeds also have an inescapable reflex influence; what we do helps to make us what we are. All our activities both manifest character and shape character; deeds are never trivial. You think, perhaps, that you may do many things now which you will not do by-and-by, and that these will have no permanent result in your future condition. It is a dangerous mistake. Many a young man indulges himself in "sowing wild oats," and forgets that every sowing has its harvest. They that sow the wind reap the whirlwind. The sins of youth are the seeds of many a grievous harvest reaped in old age with remorse and unavailing tears.

There is no greater blunder than that of ignoring or despising little things. Great crises of peril or temptation or sorrow test character, and show what fibre it has. But every day of precedent life has been a preparation, good or bad, for the crisis. The man who from his youth has been honest in little affairs will safely bear the shock and strain that come with mature years; while he who was careless of obligation in small matters falls in moral defeat and ruin when the crucial hour of temptation comes upon him.

But along with our habitual words and deeds, our associations also have a part to play in the formation of character; the companionships which you choose, or to which you willingly submit, are putting their mark on you continually. It is an old saying, that he who keeps the company of princes catches their manners. There is a strong contagion in example; it works subtly and surely, like a fine corrosion etching itself into our moral nature before we know it. "Deliver me from my friends" is often a more pertinent and needful prayer than, "Deliver me from my enemies." Against the latter we are on guard, but to the former all gates are open.

But what shall be said about the relation of circumstances to the formation of character?

There are many people in the world who have much fault to find with circumstances. They excuse failures and even vices by reference to their unfortunate or evil circumstances. "I am a victim of circumstances," is their confession and plea; but often the confession is insincere, and the plea is cowardly. It is a man's business to be the victor and not the victim of circumstances, as far as his personal character is concerned. There are no circumstances in which you cannot be true and honest. If your lot is one of poverty, you may make your very poverty a spur to such diligence and thrift as by-and-by will win the golden key to honest wealth. If you are pressed by adversity, remember that noble character is no hot-house flower which must be sheltered and kept in perpetual warmth, but a hardy plant which defies the frost and the tempest. The very storms of adversity will give you firmness of fibre and deep-rooted strength. You may have many trials, but if you so choose, these trials will be but hammers in the forge of life to smite you into finer shape and temper. "Sweet are the uses of adversity," said Shakespeare; priceless are the uses of difficulty and conflict. Edward Burke declared that, "Difficulty is a severe instructor set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental

guardian . . . who knows us better than we know ourselves, as He loves us better too. He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill; our antagonist is thus our helper." It is said oftentimes, of this or that distinguished man: "Circumstances made him." Believe it not; circumstances make no man truly great. The clouds in the western sky glow with roseate and golden hues, but their splendor is derived from the setting sun; the radiance of a great personality overflows all his surroundings and gives them a meaning not their own.

Indeed, what often are called favorable circumstances are really the most unfavorable to the development of superior character. But, whatever may be the circumstances, a human soul is greater than all its surroundings, and may subject them to its own uses, turning obstacles into allies, and winning from adversity a stubborn strength that throws the world in the wrestle of life. Whipple thus tells a story of Napoleon's general, Massena, which illustrates the masterful purpose that plucks victory out of the jaws of defeat. "After the defeat at Essling, the success of Napoleon's attempt to withdraw his beaten army depended on the character of Massena, to whom the Emperor

despatched a messenger telling him to keep his position for two hours longer at Aspern. This order, couched in the form of a request, almost required an impossibility; but Napoleon knew the indomitable tenacity of the man to whom he gave it. The messenger found Massena seated on a heap of rubbish, his eyes bloodshot, his frame weakened by his unparalleled exertions during a contest of forty hours, and his whole appearance indicating a physical state better befitting the hospital than the field. But that steadfast soul seemed altogether unaffected by bodily prostration; half dead as he was with fatigue, he rose painfully and said: 'Tell the Emperor that I will hold out for two hours, six, twenty-four, — as long as it is necessary for the safety of the army.' And . . . he kept his word."

If you are to form such a character as in your best moments you both admire and covet, you will suffer yourself to be cowed by no circumstances, however menacing they may be; you will resist the slightest pressure either of fear or of selfishness; you will remember always that no evil can master you to which you do not submit. Your own choice determines, not whether you will be tempted or not, but whether or not you will be overcome by temp-

tation; for the issue of the struggle turns not upon your individual strength alone, but upon your will reinforced by divine power. God is the ally of every soul that seeks wholly to be true. Experience sooner or later corresponds to genuine and noble aspiration. Opportunities for heroism come to him who is fitting himself for heroic action by a daily endeavor to be the best possible in thought and deed now; in the common, unnoted experiences of each successive day we shape the character which can endure the great crises of experience that come to every soul here or hereafter.

The formation of character is a vital process. It is not the result of external forces, but of our choice and volition in the sphere of our life's varying circumstances and its complex environment of diverse influences; it is in some true sense a growth which has a definite type. Character grows and strengthens continually; each day discovers some change in us, and the change is in a specific direction. There is a tendency in us toward fixity of moral nature. This development of character into distinct and permanent form is rapid. Youth is the formative period of life; then the nature is plastic: it receives impressions easily, and the impressions are lasting. Did you ever see workmen

making a moulding of plaster about a room? If so, you have observed that when the plaster is placed roughly in the angle where wall and ceiling meet, the workmen lose no time in applying the instrument which gives it the desired form. Why do they hasten? Because the plaster quickly stiffens, and must be pressed rapidly into shape or it will harden into an unsightly and unmanageable mass.

“Thou art now clay,” said Perseus, “moist and pliant; even now must thou be hastily moulded and fashioned uninterruptedly by the rapid wheel.”

My young friends, you have no time to lose in beginning your supreme task of shaping your characters into forms of symmetry and beauty. You cannot live recklessly to-day and righteously to-morrow; you cannot be foolish and vicious in your “teens” or “twenties,” and rationally hope to be wise and virtuous in your “forties.” The tendency or disposition to think and act in a certain way now quickly becomes a habit, and habit is second nature; this is true whether the present disposition be good or bad. Truthfulness becomes a habit; purity becomes a habit; honesty becomes a habit. So, also, the opposite qualities, as falsity, dishonesty, and unchastity become habits. The

young man who leads an unclean life is riveting upon himself the loathsome chains of a corrupt habit which only divine power can break.

There is no escape from this drift of nature, this tendency of character to stiffen into a definite and permanent type.

The critics have discredited the old story of George Washington, who, when a boy, said to his father: "I cannot tell a lie." I believe the story, entirely apart from external evidence, because it is prophetic of the man. The sincere, veracious, and inflexibly upright patriot and statesman fulfils the prophecy of the transparent, frank, and truth-loving boy. Some men cannot tell a lie; the habit of truth-telling is fixed, it has become incorporate with their nature. Their characters bear the indelible stamp of veracity. You and I know men whose slightest word is unimpeachable; nothing could shake our confidence in them. There are other men who cannot speak the truth; their habitual insincerity has made a twist in their characters, and this twist appears in their speech. A sculptor found a large and beautiful block of marble in a quarry. He chose it for a statue, the image of which dawned on his creative imagination; but a few blows of his chisel revealed a vein of color traversing the

snowy whiteness of the stone. He cut deeper, but the vein was still there, it ran through the entire block; nothing could hide it, no skill could take it out. The stone was rejected. Thus it is with many a character; some vein of falsity or impurity runs clear through it, and the defect is fatal.

The illustration, however, is inadequate; there is a time when the damaging vein is not in the block of life. We put it there, or suffer it to come, by our own choice; or if it seem to be there already, as the result of a baleful inheritance, we can eradicate it by persistently cultivating that integrity which grows complete in the disciplined and perfected character.

2. Consider, now, some of the principal elements of good character. There is space here for only the briefest mention of these, and the best statement of them would be less impressive and helpful to you than the examples which appear in men and women whom you know, or in those whose personalities and experiences are preserved in biography and history. Better than all others is the great personality of the Son of Man, who "came from God and went to God," and in his brief earthly sojourn exhibited the unforgettable and matchless type of what a human soul should be. There has been

but one perfect man; he was a revelation of true manhood because he was also so true and great a revelation of God. Take him as model. Look at his character,—a character formed just as yours is formed, amid earthly conditions and influences that are common, or may be common to humanity. He grew up from sweet, unconscious infancy to serene, victorious manhood, amid temptation and poverty and manifold trial. He was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;” “he learned obedience as a son,” and was “perfected through suffering.” The qualities which he exhibited,—the grace of courtesy and gentleness, the strength of courage and uprightness, the faith and patience and unselfishness, the wisdom and self-sacrifice and devotion to truth, the love of man and God which he showed,—reveal to us the essential elements of perfect human character. If we cannot equal him, we can follow after him, and following after him we shall reach a higher excellence than that to which any other master can lead us.

Many examples of noble and lofty human character came to my mind as I thought on this theme; but they all disappeared in the calm splendor of his presence, as stars fade when the rising sun soars above the horizon. The fanat-

ical caliph, Omar, said of the Koran: "Burn the libraries; their value is in this book." So one is moved to say of all good and great men, when Jesus appears upon his view: "Let them be forgotten; their excellence, and more, is all in him."

But it will be profitable to consider for a few minutes some of those qualities which all who would attain the best character, — all who, in a word, would be true men and women, — not only may but must acquire.

First among these qualities is sincerity, — that is, entire genuineness. There is an old Greek motto: Οὐ δοκεῖν, ἀλλ' εἶναι, *not to seem, but to be.*

That is the radical purpose of the sincere man. You must be *real*, — real in speech and real in action; this is the foundation of all moral worth. Let no one deceive himself as to what he is. Look yourselves in the face; banish all subterfuge and deceit.

"Be what thou seemest;
Live thy creed."

Insincerity is not a mere fault, it is at once a defect and a vice for which no brilliancy of genius or wealth of acquirements can atone.

Inseparable from sincerity is *veracity*; this is more than simple truthfulness. A man speaks

truth when his words correspond with facts; he is veracious when all his utterance is expressive of the truth which he himself is. A man of sound character is veracious; such a man, said Emerson, is "appointed by Almighty God to stand for a fact." The speech of such a man has a biblical weight.

Another quality of utmost importance is *purity*, that freedom from coarseness and pruriency which has been well called "whiteness of soul." It is an inherent repugnancy to whatever is vile; it is a moral self-respect that shrinks from an unclean thought as from an evil deed. The fabled ermine would die rather than soil its spotless fur. But purity is more than a negative quality, it is a power of spiritual perception. "Blessed are the pure in heart," said Jesus, "for they shall see God." The pure in heart do see God and live in His continual presence. This purity is not innocency, few of us have that; but it is the disciplined love of moral cleanliness which develops in the very struggle of the soul against the sin that has become self-conscious under the revelation of the ideal, divine holiness. Innocency, like youth, once lost cannot be recovered; but purity, which is higher, may be attained by every one who strives and faints not.

Another element of the best character is *generosity*, — that loving good-will toward all creatures which turns the life into a bright, gushing fountain of goodness and blessing. This is the crowning grace of noble character; this makes man most like God, for “he that loves is born of God.” You may be sincere and true and pure, but, were such a thing possible, if with all this excellence you have not a heart of love and pity and helpfulness, you are “nothing.”

Last, I mention, what has been already implied, *steadfastness* in loyalty and devotion to the right. It is the capacity to sacrifice every worldly interest in the maintenance of principle. Let me illustrate this by an incident of Scotland's heroic days. In the time of the Covenanters, John Welsh, minister of Ayr, was banished for his fidelity to his faith. His wife, a daughter of John Knox, was told by King James that her husband could return to Scotland if he would abandon his convictions, intimating that she, by a like abandonment, could induce him to do the same. Raising her apron, the noble woman replied, “Please your majesty, I'd rather keep his head there!” It was such character as hers that made possible the glorious history of the Covenanters; it is such character that makes life everywhere heroic.

The need of this was not greater in Scotland and the seventeenth century than it is in America and the nineteenth century. In society, in politics, and in religion the call is loud for men and women of stamina, —

“Men who have honor, men who will not lie,
Men who can stand before the demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;”

women who can revitalize our social life with a steadfastness of devotion to high principles which the luxury of wealth and the fascinations of ingenious and boundlessly diversified pleasure cannot undermine.

3. Finally, consider a few moments the worth of character. This scarcely needs demonstration here; life demonstrates it. The world recognizes the worth of character; all men pay tribute to it, the bad as well as the good. A knave once said to a man of distinguished honesty: “I would give twenty thousand pounds for your good name.” When asked why, he replied, “Because I could make forty thousand by it,” — a knave’s answer truly, but at the same time a significant tribute to moral worth. Commerce is built on the faith which good men inspire. “Men of character are the conscience of the society to which they belong;” they, and not the police, guarantee the execution of law, —

their influence is the bulwark of good government. It was said of the first Emperor Alexander of Russia, that his personal character was equivalent to a constitution. Of Montaigne, it was said that his personal character was a better protection for him than a regiment of horse would have been, he being the only man among the French gentry who, during the wars of the Fronde, kept his castle gates unbarred. The man of character is the true aristocrat. Mr. Smiles tells us that Robert Burns was once taken to task by a young Edinburgh blood, with whom he was walking, for recognizing an honest farmer in the open street. "Why, you fantastic gomeril!" exclaimed Burns; "it was not the great-coat, the scone-bonnet, and the Saunders-boot hose that I spoke to, but *the man* that was in them; and the man, sir, for true worth, would weigh down you and me, and ten more such, any day!" — an answer worthy of the poet who wrote, —

"The rank is but the guinea-stamp,
The man 's the gowd for a' that."

Fisher Ames, while in Congress, said of Roger Sherman of Connecticut: "If I am absent during a discussion of a subject, and consequently know not on which side to vote, I always look at Roger Sherman; for I am sure, if I vote

with him I shall vote right." He was a pious man, says his biographer, faithful in his closet, in his family, on the bench, and in the Senate-house.

But I need not multiply instances of tribute paid to character. Thank God, they abound; there is no one of you but knows some man or woman whose beautiful life makes the earth fairer, and the sunshine more bland, and gives a sounder health to society. Genius may dazzle us, but character draws us upward like a celestial gravitation. Accomplishments may win our admiration, but character commands our respect, while it shames our follies, and rebukes our vices.

Good men do not die. They pass out of our sight, and leave the walks that knew them lonesome; but in their moral power over those among whom they lived, they abide, absolving life from grossness, and keeping it wholesome. Their names become household words, are wrought into our speech, and add a new value to country and home. "The memory of the just is blessed."

You who are young are building your characters as those who build abiding habitations.

What you shall be in moral quality and power in the far future, not only of time but also of

eternity, you are now determining by your choices and your deeds, by the thoughts that you cherish, and the habits that you form, by your purposes and your faith. The situation is most interesting, and in its possibilities it is unspeakably solemn. Be wise now. Remember that you are not alone in your choice and endeavor; God is with you, and is working for you and in you. What may seem an insuperably difficult task to you, already caught in the toils of nascent habit, He will enable you successfully to achieve. He has given you a Saviour who is at once your friend and exemplar. Character in its highest form is Christ-likeness. Open your hearts freely to him; draw upon the inexhaustible sources of his power and grace; live in his companionship, in his school, under his gentle and strong mastership, and by him you will be safely led, until at last you come "unto a perfect man, — unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

HABIT.

HABIT is ten times nature.— WELLINGTON.

Small habits, well pursued betimes,
May reach the dignity of crimes.

HANNAH MORE.

It is easy to assume a habit; but when you try to cast it off, it will take skin and all.— H. W. SHAW.

Habit is the deepest law of human nature. It is our supreme strength, if also, in certain circumstances, our miserablest weakness.— CARLYLE.

The law of the harvest is to reap more than you sow. Sow an act, and you reap a habit; sow a habit, and you reap a character; sow a character, and you reap a destiny.— GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.— *Proverbs of Solomon.*

“HABIT” is one of the most familiar words of our every-day speech, and its meaning is so well known that to define it now seems superfluous; yet we shall find it both interesting and useful to trace out its root idea. “Habit” is simply the Latin *habitus* anglicized by dropping the final syllable. The verb *habeo* means primarily “to have, to possess,” then, “to have in use,” and finally, “to have a pecu-

liarity or characteristic," — acquiring, thus, in the Latin the exact significance which is expressed by the English word. "Habit" means a mode of action by which one is held so that he has a fixed disposition to act always according to that mode. For example, a man has a habit of rising at a certain hour in the morning, — that is, he is held by the disposition which brings him involuntarily to his feet each day at that specific time; or, he has a habit of using stimulants, — that is, he is held by the nervous condition which makes him crave the exhilaration of alcohol; or, he has the habit of promptness in meeting engagements, — that is, he is held by the impulse to fulfil the appointed duty at the appointed hour. The definitive characteristic of habit is the involuntary tendency to perform certain acts, yield to certain impulses, or pass into certain states of temper without the concurrence of distinct and conscious volitions.

I. Let us consider *the tendency to form habits*. This tendency is a constituent element of human nature. The truth is not simply that we may form habits; we must form habits. We have no discretion in the matter, except as to the kind of habits that we form. Man is a bundle of habits; character is the sum-total of a man's moral habits. Average human nature,

in its activities, is like a stream which seeks the easiest path to the sea, — if the stream is hindered by some obstacle, it flows round the obstacle and so moves on its way; but however tortuous its course may be, it has a definite main trend, and it wears a distinct channel, which it keeps, save as it is turned aside by some external force greater than the force of its own current and the resistance of its banks. So we, in our activities, naturally seek that course which meets the least resistance, and is most pleasant to us; and we quickly wear grooves of habit that hold us as the channel holds the river. Our course may be directed simply by inclination, and then inclination determines habit. Our wills, however, if strong, and ruled by conscience and judgment, may determine for us a course quite different from that of natural inclination, and even contrary to inclination. We may choose a course that is difficult and painful; yet even in this case a resolute will is immediately reinforced by the tendency to form habit, and soon that which was difficult and painful becomes easy and pleasant, and inclination itself is at last wholly transformed.

Many habits, perhaps it is not too much to say that most habits, begin with single, volun-

tary acts. The repetition of an act discovers in us a tendency to further repetition, until, after a time, repetition of the original act goes on involuntarily. A common and sufficient illustration of this is seen in the physical exercise of walking. The first step is a voluntary act; it is a difficult and even perilous act. Watch a child learning to walk, and you will see the germ of a habit in process of development. Great interest centres in the little novice making his first experiment at "getting on in the world." What care is taken by the fond mother that the experiment shall result in no mishap. In a little time that which was at first an uncertain effort becomes an assured habit, and walking ceases to be self-conscious and voluntary; it is henceforth instinctive and automatic.

All forms of physical exercise tend to pass thus from voluntary beginnings into involuntary habits. The easy grace of the gymnast or the bicycle rider, or the precision in drill and manual of the disciplined soldier, is simply well-formed and developed habit. Essentially the same is true of our mental and moral exercises. Habit lies at the basis of all our ordinary action; everything that we do repeatedly becomes easy and habitual.

"How use doth breed a habit in a man!"

The tendency to form habits is persistent and irresistible; and on the higher plane of life, the intellectual and moral, it has its largest scope and most fully discloses its fateful power. It is not true that habit has its spring solely in our physical organism; but it is true that all our voluntary acts are mediately caused by, or inseparably connected with, changes in nerve tissue and expenditure of nervous energy. There is a physical side to all our activity of mind as well as of body. The change of tissue is as inevitable an accompaniment of thinking as it is of walking, of praying as of playing on a piano. The exact relation of mind to matter in the human organism is still an unsolved problem; but this at least is clear, that mind and body are inseparable in this world. This also is clear, that all our activities, voluntary as well as involuntary, while they are carried on at the expense of nervous energy, also react on our nervous organism, making definite and more or less permanent impressions. While all habits can scarcely be purely physical, most of them are very largely and some of them wholly physical. The nervous system is like a phonograph into which vibrations are continually sent, and these vibrations register themselves in such a way that they are not only reproducible, but

are continually reproduced. This is evidently true with reference to all habits that have a predominantly sensuous manifestation. Says Dr. W. B. Carpenter: "Our nervous system grows to the modes in which it has been exercised." The strength of the habit of alcoholic intemperance lies in this, — that impressions are scored into the nervous organism by stimulants, and these impressions report themselves in the demand of the nerves for a repetition of the stimulant. At first the demand is slight for the impression is slight; but successive indulgences deepen the impressions, and thus the demand grows strong and imperious. The appetite for alcohol is fundamentally physical, though its cause may be an act of the will. Once formed, the appetite cannot be willed out of existence any more than a wound can be willed out of existence; it must be healed. The apprehension of this truth has led many of the wisest thinkers to the conviction that the habit of drunkenness falls within the domain of medical rather than moral pathology, and must be treated as a disease.

Within certain wide limits, however, the nervous system is immediately subject to the influence of the will; and by the intelligent use of means that subjection of the nerves to the will

may be immensely increased. It is in the power of a man "to keep his body under," unless he has lost his power by suffering appetite, through long indulgence, to usurp authority over him until it has intrenched itself in confirmed physical habits.

Habits of bodily action are clearly the reflex of impressions repeatedly made on the nerves; there is no doubt that mental and moral habits also are in large part the expression of reflex nervous action. Do not fear that I am approaching a materialistic conception of human life. The soul of man is not matter; nor is it dependent on matter for existence, though it is dependent on material organs for expression. The body is not the man, but the man's instrument. The more we learn about it and its relations to the soul the better; for bodily conditions potentially affect the entire range of life, from those activities which ally us to the brute up to those which reveal our kinship to God. Thought is not produced by the brain; but it is elaborated through cerebral instrumentation, and, apparently, is registered on the cerebral tissues. Our habits of thinking have thus a physical basis. This is equally true of our spiritual exercises, for all these have a rational element, — that is, they all involve mental action, and mental action is

invariably accompanied by physical change. Our feelings also have their accompaniment of nerve-impressions. Many who read Dr. Holland's "Bitter-Sweet," when it appeared thirty odd years ago, were shocked because he made one of his characters moralize over a barrel of corned beef to the effect that the beef might,

"Nerve the toiler at his task,
A soul at prayer."

But, aside from the question of good taste and poetical fitness, we can have no quarrel with the author. Food makes tissue and nerve-force, and the use and expenditure of these are as certainly involved in worship as they are in work. You cannot do, or say, or think, or feel anything without leaving a definite mark on the nervous organism which more or less affects all succeeding action or speech or thought or feeling. Habits may be called the grooves that are worn into the nerves by repeated actions. Memory, while it is a true psychical exercise, has its physical side; remembering is re-reading impressions which past actions of the mind have left on the sensitive brain. Although this is not an exhaustive account of memory, it is probably a true account as far as it goes.

A thoughtful investigation of this subject,

“Habit,” must show us the folly and even sin of neglecting or despising the body. Through the susceptibilities of the body we are continually forming those habits, cutting deep those channels which control and guide the larger part of our conduct, and so go far toward determining our future. Surely it was a prophetic insight into our complex nature that led an old writer to exclaim: “I am fearfully and wonderfully made!”

There is immense practical significance in this fact of the physical basis of habit. Clear your minds of the notion that any act of your lives is unimportant. Single acts are the beginnings of habits; every repetition of an act tends to make it habitual, and the forming habit is the registry of emotions and thoughts and deeds in the very substance of your physical organism. You are unconsciously writing a history in your nerves, and this history you cannot wipe out at will, as you may wipe out a scrawl on a blackboard; it endures and it reproduces itself. The thoughts of your mind, the purposes and impulses of your heart, your passions, your affections, your aspirations, and your beliefs stamp themselves indelibly on your nervous system; they cut channels of habit; they re-act upon your soul continually for good

or ill; they shape your characters; and your character is what you are, what you will be always.

You cannot avoid forming habits. The tendency to form them is part of your original endowment; it is given to you only to determine whether your habits shall be evil or good, baleful or beneficent. Have a care, then, over what you do, and what you think and feel. Safety and happiness alike are found only in practising those actions and indulging those tastes which are pure and right. All wrongdoing, whether it be outward or inward, is self-wounding.

Any act once performed is repeated with lessened difficulty. A man who makes a shoe finds it easier to make a second; a study on the piano, thoroughly mastered, gives the player increased facility in mastering another. Ease and skill in any sort of performance attest developed habit; a lesson learned makes all succeeding lessons easier. The same is true of moral actions; every sin prepares the way for another sin. The first conscious lie may be painful to him who utters it, but the second is less painful, and the third still less, until in a little time lying becomes habitual and involuntary. A generous deed promotes a succession

of generous deeds. Our highest activities illustrate this law of facility attained by repetition. Even faith is subject to the habit-forming tendency of our nature; a real exercise of trust in God makes it less difficult to trust again and again. Prayer may become habitual, not in form merely but in spirit, so that at last one shall pray as naturally and instinctively as he breathes. Virtue sedulously practised in spite of temptation by-and-by becomes involuntary, almost automatic. Here is a man who is accomplished in righteousness. Why is it? Because he has practised righteousness until the habit of doing righteously is fixed. Another man is confirmed in vice; his evil accomplishment is the evidence of vicious deeds repeated until the repetition has become instinctive, and he is vicious from habit.

Here is a broad and significant fact of human life; the philosophy of it we may not be able fully to formulate or grasp, but the fact is plain. Our first business in life is to adjust ourselves to indisputable facts. If you desire to be virtuous you must begin the practice of virtue at once, even though inclination and temptation combine to make it difficult and even painful. Begin and persist, and by-and-by the practice will be easy and delightful. If you wish to be a Chris-

tian, — that is, not a mere “professor,” but one who lives according to the mind of Christ, — you must take the first step voluntarily and resolutely; God has made it possible for you to acquire a trustful, loving, and holy habit.

Remember that if you are not forming habits in one direction, you are forming them in another; all your activities are making channels in which your energy flows toward good or evil. As Dryden wrote: —

“Ill habits gather by unseen degrees,
As brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas;”

and as Augustine declared, “Habit, if not resisted, soon becomes necessity.”

2. *Our inherent tendency to form habits is a peril or a safeguard, according as our choices are wrong or right.* On the one hand we are in peril, through the formation of evil habits, of becoming hopelessly fixed in evil character. What is a hardened conscience but the confirmed habit of resisting wholesome, moral influences? Depravity is not an inheritance, but a character formed by the persistent habit of disobeying God; it approaches completeness when wickedness becomes easy. Sir George Staunton told a friend that he had visited a man in India who had committed a

murder. This man — in order not only to save his life, but what was of much greater consequence to him, his caste — had submitted to the penalty imposed, which was, that he should sleep for seven years on a bedstead without any mattress, the whole surface of which was studded with points of iron resembling nails, but not so sharp as to penetrate his flesh. Sir George saw him in the fifth year of his probation, and his skin was then like the hide of a rhinoceros. By that time he could sleep comfortably on his “bed of thorns;” and he remarked that at the expiration of the seven years he should probably continue from choice the system which he had adopted from necessity. What a vivid parable of a sinful life this incident presents! Sin, at first a bed of thorns, after a time becomes comfortable through the deadening of moral sensibility; to this condition Saint Paul refers, when he speaks of those who, “being past feeling, gave themselves up . . . to work all uncleanness with greediness.” It is perilous to tamper with sin, however strong we may be. “Sins are at first like cobwebs, but at last like cables.” On every side one may see examples of bondage to evil habit. Here is a man who once had generous impulses, but now he is bound fast in the

chains of covetous habit. Here is another who indulged in lustful thoughts and desires until the habit of licentiousness took full possession of him; and now he is a moral leper. Here is another who, once honest, is now habitually dishonest. No one of these intended to be what he has become; but each began to do evil, perhaps thoughtlessly, and at last evil has passed into habit, and habit has crystallized into character.

But habit is also a safeguard of virtue.

“That monster, Custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good,
He likewise gives a frock or livery
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence, the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of Nature,
And either shame the Devil or throw him out
With wondrous potency.”

John Foster has said that “in the great majority of things habit is a greater plague than ever afflicted Egypt; in religious character it is eminently a felicity. The devout man exults to feel that in aid of the simple force of the divine principle within him there has grown by time an accustomed power which has almost taken the place of his will, and

holds a firm though quiet domination through the general action of his mind. He feels this confirmed habit as the grasp of the hand of God, which will never let him go." It is impossible to over-estimate the value of good habits. We see readily the force of an evil habit; perhaps we need not look beyond our own experience for examples. Many a Christian man finds his present life a continuous fight against habits which he formed before he became a Christian. Sometimes we feel as if a demon had got intrenched in our very flesh, and holding such vantage ground, plagues us with terrible power. He who is involved in such a struggle comes into a new and most vivid understanding of Saint Paul's cry: "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The physical basis of habit often retards the outward process of sanctification so much that a man's life is but a poor index of his real spiritual attainments. It suggests also a new aspect of death as the minister of God's grace to some of His beleaguered children. Take heart, O struggling soul; the fight is long and hard; but by-and-by kind death will give the full liberty from the flesh which you so earnestly desire! Sin holds its seat in the nerves long after its

power over the spirit is broken; surely when the compassionate grave receives the perverted nerves, the tormented spirit will find peace.

But while we are familiar with the truth that there is tremendous power in evil habits, we do not so readily nor so clearly perceive that there is equal power in good habits. The reason is, perhaps, that we are slower to form good habits, unless we are exceptionally placed in the midst of good influences, because the formation of good habits involves self-restraint and discipline, while the formation of evil habits does not. Still this great conservative tendency of our nature — the tendency to form habits — can be fully utilized in the interests of a holy life. Good habits can be formed, and when they are formed they have all the inherent and characteristic strength of habits; they are the bulwarks of religious faith and the impregnable citadels of virtue. From one point of view the most eminent virtues are only perfected habits. Many a man owes his success in business to the early formation of habits of diligence and economy and perseverance. I remember a boy who formed the habit at his father's wood-pile of never giving up a tough knot until he had sent his axe through the very heart of it; and many a time, I am

sure, that boy has found help in life's hardest struggles from the discipline got on that wood-pile, and the habit there formed of accomplishing what he attempted. The patient effort to overcome difficulties begets the habit of overcoming difficulties, until finally difficulties cease to be formidable. Education, rightly conceived, is the habit of sound thinking secured through repeated, systematic exercise of the rational faculties. Not only the mind but the brain itself is involved in the process of education to such a degree that its conformation, and to some extent its very structure, are changed. "The great thing in all education," says Professor James, "is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy. It is to fund and capitalize our acquisitions, and live at ease upon the interest of the fund. For this we must make automatic and habitual as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and guard against the growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us, as we would guard against the plague." Education is thus mainly the forming of good mental habits. Rectitude is only the confirmed habit of doing what is right. The simple, common graces of politeness and amiability, which some people exhibit so constantly and win-

ningly, often are not the result of a constitutional advantage over others, but of polite and amiable habits patiently formed. Cheerfulness is a habit that may be cultivated to such a degree as to render gloominess and moroseness impossible. The habit of seeing the good there is in every day's experience has contributed largely to the success of many a man in business or in a profession. David Hume declared that the habit of seeing the bright side of things was worth more than a thousand pounds a year. Men and women sometimes complain of having "the blues;" they are victims of a doleful habit which they need not have acquired, and for which they are clearly responsible. Benevolence, too, is a habit; no man gives largely and beautifully till he has learned to give, — that is, till he has formed the habit of giving. Prayer also may become a habit; not as a form merely, though in the matter of form habit is a help, but as a genuine spiritual exercise, — a movement of the soul toward God in worship and communion.

Thus there is in our tendency to form habits, and our ability to form habits, a powerful conservative force for good. The perfect righteousness of saints in heaven is, from one point of view, but the finished habit of living rightly,

— of “doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.”

3. Finally, consider *the importance of forming right habits in youth*. Then the nature is plastic and easily pressed into any mould; then the nervous system as well as the mind is most susceptible to impressions, and impressions are most enduring. The course of most lives is determined before the first twenty or twenty-five years have passed, because during those years the habits which mould character are formed. “Live as long as you may,” said Southey, “the first twenty years are the longest half of your life.” Smiles tells us that when the worn-out slanderer and voluptuary, Dr. Walcott, lay on his death-bed, one of his friends asked if he could do anything to gratify him. “Yes,” said the dying man, eagerly, “give me back my youth.” It was a vain request; there is no renewal of the ingenuousness and plasticity of youth. Opportunities once lost, are lost forever. Evil habits that have become wholly possessed of a man are relentless tyrants, — rather, they are fetters which youth forges and which old age has no power to break. Disregard of this truth has brought remediless disaster and unappeasable sorrow to many a soul. Augustine in his “Confessions” bears impressive testimony

to the force of evil habit; he says: "My will the enemy held, and thence had made a chain for me, and bound me. For of a froward will was a lust made; and a lust served became custom; and custom not resisted became necessity. By which links, as it were, joined together, a hard bondage held me intralled."

There are few men who do not live to regret habits formed in their youth. If only the young would be wise enough to heed the examples and warnings of the old! Professor James, in his work on psychology, has written so intelligently and sagaciously that I cannot forbear quoting somewhat at length. He says: —

"The physiological study of mental conditions is thus the most powerful ally of hortatory ethics. The hell to be endured hereafter, of which theology tells, is no worse than the hell we make for ourselves in this world by habitually fashioning our characters in the wrong way. Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its never so little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, 'I won't count this time!' Well, he may not count it, and a kind Heaven may

not count it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve-cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out." — *Psychol.* Vol. I. p. 127.

Have you thought how significant is the fact that most active, fruitful Christians became such when they were young; and that the men and women of sterling character whom you know received their life's bent in early years; that the patient and the pure and the generous — those whom all admire and love — are but revealing the force and result of early formed habits? A young tree can be bent to any shape with ease, but a tree that has weathered the storms of fifty years cannot be changed. How few persons are radically changed in mature life. Habit is fixed; the character is set; the life-current has worn deep channels that hold it as the rocky walls of its cañon hold the ancient river.

Young men and women, take this truth home to your hearts: you are responsible to God and to humanity for your habits, for upon these depends your usefulness or harmfulness in the world. I do not mean merely those external habits which are mainly physical in their man-

ifestation as well as their basis, but those inward habits which determine the quality of your moral life and influence, — your habits of feeling and thinking and willing, of speaking and doing. God has given you the precious, perilous power of shaping your future by giving you the power of choice and of ruling your own growth. The alternative is before every one: on this hand, good, on that, evil; and God has said: “Choose ye which ye will.” But He has not left you alone in the choice; the energy of His love, the instruction of His word written in the Bible, in history, in Nature, and in your own constitution, and the quickening force of His spirit, all combine to help you in your choice and execution of the good. What shall be the issue if you choose the evil? You can not urge habit as an excuse for sin, for you make habit and must account for that. You cannot drift into righteousness. Habits must be formed consciously and with vigilant purpose; you must create righteous habit by resolutely willing to do righteously. Sin may be forgiven, but forgiveness does not unbind the fetters of habit. The love and power of God will enable you to resist and overcome evil habits already formed; but the soul that would enter into life must strive.

Gird yourselves, then, for the great achievement of a righteous life, and open your heart to the spiritual forces that will vitalize and energize your whole being for the glorious and successful struggle.

“Thronging through the cloud-rift, whose are they, the faces
Faint revealed yet sure divined, the famous ones of old?
‘What’ — they smile — ‘our names, our deeds so soon erases
Time upon his tablet where Life’s glory lies enrolled?”

“‘Was it for mere fool’s-play, make-believe, and mumming,
So we battled it like men, not boylike sulked or whined?
Each of us heard clang God’s “Come!” and each was
coming :
Soldiers all, to forward-face, not sneaks to lag behind !

“‘How of the field’s fortune? That concerned our Leader!
Led, we struck our stroke, nor cared for doings left
and right :
Each as on his sole head, failer or succeder,
Lay the blame, or lit the praise : no care for cowards :
fight!’

“Then the cloud-rift broadens, spanning earth that’s under,
Wide our world displays its worth, man’s strife and
strife’s success :
All the good and beauty, wonder crowning wonder,
Till my heart and soul applaud perfection, nothing less.”

COMPANIONSHIP.

HE that walketh with wise men shall be wise. — *Proverbs of Solomon.*

Keep good company, and you shall be of the number. —
GEORGE HERBERT.

No man in effect doth accompany with others, but he learneth, ere he is aware, some gesture, voice, or fashion. — LORD BACON.

I set it down as a maxim, that it is good for a man to live where he can meet his betters, intellectual and moral. — THACKERAY.

It is better and safer to ride alone than to have a thief's company; and such is a wicked man, who will rob thee of precious time, if he do thee no more mischief. — SPENCER.

It is certain that either wise bearing, or ignorant carriage, is caught as men take diseases, one of another; therefore, let men take heed of their company. — SHAKESPEARE.

Be not deceived; evil companionships corrupt good morals. — SAINT PAUL.

IN the beginning of his famous essay on "Friendship," Lord Bacon quotes some one as saying that, "whosoever is delighted in solitude, is either a wild beast or a god." The quotation was probably a condensed reproduction from memory of Aristotle's saying in the

“Politica,” that “He who is unable to mingle in society, or who requires nothing, by reason of sufficing for himself, is no part of the state, so that either he is a wild beast or a divinity.” It is true that man is naturally and universally a social being. He cannot easily live alone; at least, no one in mental and moral health is willingly solitary. We are all drawn to our kind by deep and almost ineradicable instinct; there is something confessedly abnormal and even monstrous in the confirmed recluse. But obligation as well as inclination binds us to our fellow-men. Society is the sphere of our moral duties; and it is also the necessary condition of the development and fulfilment of our individual life. Each man completes himself in other men. The command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” expresses no arbitrary requirement, but a duty to self as well as to the neighbor; it is in some sense a formula of rational and moral development. I need to love my neighbor quite as much as my neighbor needs me to love him. But it is also true that at times we seek and need solitude because of certain inward experiences that absorb our energies and make companionship temporarily painful, or even impossible. A great sorrow or a great temptation, or even a great joy, may drive the soul into

loneliness; this loneliness, however, must be transient, and the normal condition of our lives is that of conscious relatedness and companionship. The Christ descended alike from the mount of temptation and the mount of transfiguration to mingle his life afresh with the life of humanity. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity formulates the instinctive repugnance of the human mind to the idea of absolute, divine solitariness, as if the very manifoldness of the divine nature were necessary to the perfect divine felicity. Jesus himself finds the type of human unity in the unity of the Father and the Son.

Our life, at least, is neither complete nor healthful save as it is blended with the common life of our fellow-beings. We instinctively seek friendships, and the reliefs and helps which friendships bring to us, in all our ordinary experiences of joy and grief. Lord Bacon, with his wonted wisdom, said, "The communicating of a man's self to his friend works two contrary effects, for it redoubleth joys and cutteth griefs in halves; for there is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less." There is an exquisite German proverb, —

“ Geteilte Freude, doppelte Freude ;
Geteilter Schmerz, halber Schmerz.”

Which may be rendered,

Divided joys are doubled joys,
Divided sorrow is sorrow halved.

With rare exceptions both joy and sorrow waken the impulse to communicate to others what we feel.

Our susceptibility to society appears vividly in the great and indefinable influence of a multitude upon our moods and our nature. We are drawn to a multitude as by gravitation, and under its influence for the moment almost lose our individuality in the common impulse by which it is swayed. How often men speak and act in a crowd as they would not, as they *could* not, if they were alone. A considerable part of the conduct of most men is the result not of individual conviction and purpose, but of popular temper and tendency. The individual is raised above himself, or sunk below himself, by the temporary judgment or passion of the crowd. This is true also in the narrower sphere of one's immediate companionships. Rarely does a man act with entire independence; the influence of those about him affects him unconsciously and more or less qualifies all the expression of his life.

But my purpose now is to consider not the general subject of man's relation to society, but the more specific subject of companionship. A companion, according to the root-idea of the word, is one with whom we eat bread,—from *con*, with, or together, and *panis*, bread. One's companions are those with whom he associates; a certain degree of intimacy is implied. A distinction is sometimes drawn between companions and friends: one's friends being those with whom, in frank confidence, he shares his inner life; while his companions include, besides friends, those with whom he lives on a more or less familiar but not intimate footing. The distinction is a true one; for while companions may be many, friends are few. However, for my present purpose, I may disregard this distinction, and I ask you to think about the influence and the obligations of companionship. What I have to say falls easily under these two heads:—

1. The Influence of Companions;
2. The Choice of Companions.

1. At the outset let us understand clearly that each of us is sure to be influenced by those who are about him, with whom he talks and works and lives. Some are influenced less than others by their associates, for some natures have

little impressibility. These may be neither the nobler nor the stronger natures, for a high degree of susceptibility to human influence is quite compatible with a robust and self-respecting individuality. But most of us are susceptible to a far greater degree than we are aware. The tides of life that pour upon us continually leave their impress for good or ill in our thoughts, our habits, and our characters. The majority of men belong to their own generation, in the sense that they are generically like their contemporaries. Here and there arises a stalwart individual who lives in advance of his time, and even presents a type of a generation to come. These are prophetic men, — great thinkers like Roger Bacon and Giordano Bruno and Ephraem Gotthold Lessing, and great reformers like Wicklif and Huss and Savonarola. But most men are children of their own time, the assimilating force of society being greater than the differencing force of individuality. In the narrow circle of each one's acquaintance the influence of companionship on character is most clearly seen. There is an old English proverb: "Tell me with whom thou goest, and I'll tell thee what thou doest."

Our conduct is constantly and powerfully affected by those with whom we continually

associate. We cannot evade this influence. We may determine whether our associates shall be good or bad, and thus whether the influence upon us shall be helpful or harmful, but we cannot escape the dynamic environment. "Be not deceived," said Saint Paul, "evil companionships corrupt good morals." We almost inevitably take the moral tone of our chosen surroundings. This is one side of the truth, but there is another; if evil associates corrupt us, good associates purify and elevate us. But the truth that I would press upon your minds until you cannot forget it is this: Whatever your companionships may be, they must and will exert a profound influence on your characters. Ignorance of this truth, or disregard of it, is sure to result in serious damage. Do not think that you can company with coarse fellows and not grow coarse yourself. Do not think that you can associate habitually with the impure and at the same time preserve your own purity. Lavater said: "He who comes from the kitchen smells of its smoke; he who adheres to a sect has something of its cant; the college air pursues the student, and dry inhumanity him who herds with literary pedants." There is a Latin proverb: "If you always live with those who are lame, you will yourself learn to limp."

The most serious mistakes of ingenuous youth are made in the choice of companions. Susceptibility to the charms of cleverness and good fellowship, enthusiasm and ignorance of the world, combine to make them easy victims of the designing, or to blind them to the real character of those whom circumstance makes their companions. No generous young man coldly chooses to do evil, or knowingly accepts the bad as his associates. There are many who would shrink with horror from becoming vulgar and profane and licentious, who would passionately recoil from the thought of committing a deed of dishonesty or shame, who yet thoughtlessly allow themselves to enter into fellowship with those whose influence is evil ; and in a little time imperceptibly their fine sense of honor is blunted, their purity is tainted, their good impulses are weakened and overborne, and in a few years they become capable of unanticipated grossness or even crime. There are many young men in this city to-night who not long ago came here comparatively pure, with instincts, if not principles, of truthfulness and uprightness ; but already they have passed through a sinister transformation. They have become knowing with a questionable knowledge. Their speech is marked by smartness and ready innuendo that easily

opens into actual obscenity. They have learned to swear and swagger. They frequent the saloons, are familiar with the back entrances to the theatres, and know the way to places where shame holds perpetual carnival. Some of them have acquired the art of cheating washerwomen and boarding-house keepers, and of clandestinely borrowing money from their employer's till. They are fast young men, — fast indeed! — journeying fast down the road to physical and intellectual and moral ruin. Have I not sketched truly, if in outline, the biography of many a young man in every great city of our land? Again and again, with little variations of detail, does the Christian minister hear from the trembling lips of broken-hearted fathers the story of sons who have gone down into an earthly perdition, and the explanation of it all in the significant words: "They began running with bad company." So too there are young women in this city to-night whose prematurely faded cheeks bear the brand of vice and shame, whose "feet go down to death," whose "steps take hold on hell." Not very long ago some of these were innocent and full of good impulses; they meant no evil, but, careless and wayward, they joined hands unwittingly with those whose touch was pollution, and

under the influence of such associates they have gone down a steep road to ruin, while desolated homes and broken hearts witness to the far-reaching malign influence of evil companionship. Few who are now sunk in wretchedness and social ruin would have gone to ruin alone; but the strong attraction of companions whose unscrupulousness was disguised under the form of friendship has drawn the simple out of the path of purity, and given that impetus toward vice which pushes the fallen rapidly down to death.

You to whom I speak may be, or may think yourselves to be, safe, but remember, however firm your resolution to be honest and pure, if you associate habitually with those who are bad, you subject yourselves to a dangerous test. By your choice the bad are in the majority, and they will at last make you like themselves.

But if evil companionship is powerful for evil, good companionship is equally powerful for good. Many a boy unhappily born amid vicious surroundings has been redeemed from vice by being placed among the pure. Under the constant influence of gentleness and purity and integrity his character gradually has acquired these qualities, and his life has developed into an ornament and a blessing to society.

Even men of confirmed evil habits have been powerfully affected, and sometimes saved, by the example and influence of the good. It is said that when Lord Peterborough lodged for a time with the holy Fénelon, he was so affected by Fénelon's piety and virtue that he exclaimed at parting: "If I stay here any longer I shall become a Christian in spite of myself." The history of domestic life, were it fully written, would show many an instance of a coarse-grained and immoral husband gradually softened and refined by the companionship of a pure and high-minded wife until he became an honest, kindly gentleman. It is true Tennyson makes the disappointed and angry lover exclaim, as he half-vengefully forecasts the fate of his lost mistress:—

"As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee
down ;"

but the reverse is quite as often true, — the fineness of the wife's nature having the force to subdue and chasten the grossness of the husband's nature. Saadi, the great Persian poet, thus beautifully represents the influence of goodness. "One day," he says, "as I was in the bath, a friend put into my hand a piece of scented clay.

I took it, and said to it, 'Art thou musk or ambergris, for I am charmed with thy perfume?' It answered, 'I was a despicable piece of clay; but I was some time in the company of the rose, and the quality of my sweet companion was communicated to me; otherwise I should only be a bit of clay as I appear to be.'" He who chooses his companions among the good and the true will at last become like them, for every noble impulse and aspiration will be awakened in his heart, and he will discover for himself at last the same hidden sources of moral strength as those from which they draw the beautifying virtue of their lives.

It is this very power of good companionship which makes the Church, when it is really alive with the spirit of Christ, so safe and so wholesome for the young. It furnishes not only stimulating examples of fidelity to truth and righteousness, but also a purer and more loving fellowship than is found in any other society on earth. The Church which seeks to approximate its great ideal develops a force promotive of the best culture of heart as well as of mind. It strives after, and measurably secures, a large and generous manhood and womanhood. Many a man owes far more to the Church than he has ever appreciated. Had he been alone in the

world, wanting the quickening and supporting influence of the Church's kindly and pure fellowship, his moral purpose would have been overborne by the forces of evil about him, and temptation would have swept him into ruinous sin. But, surrounded as he has been by those who, like him, are striving to live according to the mind of Christ, he has found his little strength reinforced again and again, his failing purpose revived, and his whole moral being freshly invigorated by the common endeavor after the higher life. The united forces of the sympathizing many have fortified his weak faith, and he has stood fast until virtue has become the habit of his life. The firmest ground of security in an upright life is continual, conscious dependence on God; but the main channel through which divine grace comes to us is the vital sympathy and loving fellowship of good men and women who are bound to us in the ties of a common faith. The Church is not an institution so much as it is a fellowship of those who love God and their brethren. Many are the testimonies that have come to me from men who are living bravely and hopefully that they are able so to live because, in their struggle with sin and sorrow, they find continual encouragement to strive against temptation and

endure adversity, and continual incentives to attempt the good, in the tonic atmosphere of the Christian Church.

2. If, then, the influence of habitual companions is so powerful for good or ill, it is vastly important that we choose those which are good, — that we choose the best. There is a law of affinity among men.

“ Like will to like ; each creature loves his kind,”

sang the poet Herrick. In the old Jewish book, “ Ecclesiasticus,” I find these proverbs: “ All flesh consorteth according to kind, and a man will cleave to his like ;” “ The birds will resort unto their like ;” “ Cicada is dear to cicada, and ant to ant, and hawks to hawks.” Have we not in the last two the original of the old English proverb: “ Birds of a feather flock together ”? At any rate the proverb is true. The bad in heart prefer to be with the bad, and the frivolous with the frivolous, and the pure with the pure. You do not find the upright man willingly in the company of the debauchee and the gambler, except for the purpose of discharging some imperative duty ; nor do you find the vicious man voluntarily seeking the companionship of the virtuous and the devout, save as he may have in view some personal gain. The

moment the vicious man sincerely seeks companionship with the good, that moment he has ceased to be wholly vicious.

But there are many who are not yet bad, whose impulses are on the whole good, and whose desire is to be honest and virtuous. They are lacking, however, in well-tempered judgment and solid strength of character. The chief peril of these is that of forming evil companionships. They do not naturally seek the bad; nor do they promptly and resolutely attach themselves to the good. Inexperienced and thoughtless, they yield readily to the first impulse; pleasure is attractive, and they are easily beguiled by those who make vice plausible. There is a singular fascination in freedom from moral restraint. They are mastered by the influence of their environment, and quickly decline from comparative innocence to habitual and ever-deepening immorality. Scarcely any other choice in early life is so important as the choice of companions; upon that choice often turns the whole question of success or failure in life.

Consider, then, this important truth, that you have it in your power unselfishly to draw to yourself the best service of your fellow-creatures. No matter what your circumstances are, you can win and keep the company of

those who are intelligent and virtuous as well as agreeable. You *can* have such companionship as shall help you to be true and clean and worthy men and women. I know how great obstacles poverty raises, or seems to raise, in the way of many who would seek elevating companionship; but I am not sure that wealth often does not raise still greater obstacles. I am not sure but that the poor young man or woman has less to contend with in this respect than the rich. Those who are born and nurtured in wealth are more subject to the conventional exactions of society, which often make the free choice of companions difficult. But many of the obstacles to a choice of the best companionship are imaginary, and none of them are insurmountable. Some of your associates in study or work may be coarse or profane or dissipated; but there is no law, social or moral, that compels you to choose your friends and companions from among them. The good always welcome those who seek to attain goodness. No associations which you do not desire can be forced on you; and none which you unselfishly seek will be denied you. As it is your duty to be master of your circumstances, so it is your duty to determine your companionships. This often requires courage, sometimes

a very fine-tempered courage. You must dare sometimes to be singular; you must not fear to give offence, if offence is taken at your exercise of the personal right of selecting your habitual associates. You must be brave enough to stand against a majority, if need be, and "to refuse to follow the multitude to do evil." Especially is courage needed if once you have been led astray, and still bear the scars, if not the unhealed wounds, of your fall. A man who had renounced the use of intoxicants, after having used them to excess, was asked by some of his old comrades to drink with them; but he refused. They urged him; but he was firm, saying, "I am a brand plucked from the burning." They asked what he meant, at the same time saying that one drink would do him no harm; the man replied: "Look here! you know there is a difference between a brand and a green stick. If a spark fall on a brand that has been partly burned, it will soon catch fire again; not so with a green stick. I tell you I am that brand plucked out of the fire; and I dare not venture into the way of temptation for fear of being set on fire again." In relation to this or that indulgence already you may be a brand. Take care that through your very friendships the spark may not fall on you which will re-

kindle the baleful fire. If you are still so young, or have been so shielded by the influences of a pure home, that you are the "green stick," remember that it does not take long to become a brand. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." The accident of a day may begin a friendship that will last for years. Associates are easily found if one is indifferent to their character; others will seek you, if you do not seek them. You will not lack friends, such as they are, if you are accessible to those who would gain something from you; but you must be positive, choosing for yourself fit companions with whom you may form a compact of mutual helpfulness and pleasure. Choose your associates primarily for their intrinsic moral qualities. Many people run after the rich; others cultivate the clever man because he is clever. There are others who find the chief attraction in mere physical strength; every pugilist has his coterie of admirers. Some people seem to measure the worth of a man solely by his physical qualities. Spence, in his "Anecdotes," relates that Pope the poet was with Sir Godfrey Kneller the artist, one day, when the latter's nephew, a Guinea slave-trader, came into the room. "Nephew," said Sir Godfrey, "you have the honor of seeing the two

greatest men in the world." "I don't know how great men you may be," said the Guinea man; "but I don't like your looks. I have often bought a man much better than both of you, all muscles and bones, for ten guineas." Bestial men select their companions for their bestial qualities. If you choose companions that are bestial they will soon put the mark of the beast on you. If you have some sentimental notion that you will do them good by remaining on terms of intimacy with them, put the fond dream out of your head; you will far more likely do them good by abandoning them. They will have, for once at least, the suggestive example of a man who has moral convictions and the manliness to act in accordance with them. If you have companions that can speak lightly of woman, or sneer at a mother's counsel, or scoff at religion, leave them. Whatever qualities they may possess which excite your admiration, — wit, accomplishments, prodigality mis-called generosity, — they certainly will do you only harm.

There are intellectual as well as moral advantages in having the best associates. If you habitually talk with a man of cultivated tastes and speech, you will insensibly take on his quality. To know some men and women inti-

mately is equivalent to a liberal education. Choose associates that will elevate you. It is a capital rule for a young man to follow, to cultivate the acquaintance of some men and women who are distinctly his superiors in intelligence and refinement. If you are sincere and modest, no good man whose influence you desire to receive will repel you. If you would get knowledge, talk much with those who know more than you do; if you would improve your taste, seek intercourse with those whose taste is refined by the best culture. If you would be established in virtue, associate habitually with the virtuous; if you would be a Christian, keep the company of some Christian who, like Fénelon, wins all by the pure charm of his genuine piety. This is almost always in your power; and if it were not, you would better have no companions than those whose influence lowers the tone of your moral life. If you are so exceptionally placed that you can find no good people to hold fellowship with, then in the name of God stand alone with Him; but no sincere soul is long left companionless in this world. As Confucius said: "Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practises it will have neighbors."

We need occasionally to remind ourselves

that we are responsible for our companionships. As we have power and opportunity to choose the good, so we are to blame if we choose and keep the bad. There are many who, if they are unsuccessful, find fault with circumstances; if they are overcome by temptation, they blame their evil associates. But no man can clear himself of guilt by shirking his personal responsibility for what he does and what he is. The streak of cowardice in Adam which made him say: "The woman whom Thou gavest me tempted me," has come down to many of his descendants. But this plea, if given as a sufficient excuse for sin, is a pitiful evasion of the truth. Tempter or temptress will be unerringly judged, but meanwhile the tempted has his account to give. There is an old legend that a fool and a wise man were journeying together. They came to a point where two ways opened before them, — one broad and beautiful, the other narrow and rough. The fool desired to take the pleasant way; the wise man knew that the hard way was the shortest and safest, and so declared. But at last the urgency of the fool prevailed; they took the more inviting path, and ere long were met by robbers who seized their goods and made them captives. Soon after both they and their captors were

arrested by officers of the law and taken before the judge. Then the wise man pleaded that the fool was to blame because he desired to take the wrong way. The fool pleaded that he was only a fool and no sensible man should have heeded his counsel. The judge decided that both were wrong and punished them equally. The moral of the legend is clear: "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Be sure that if you consent to the enticement of sinners the Supreme Judge will not hold you guiltless. Your responsibility is as broad as your whole voluntary life. It covers not only acts but also motives; not only your individual course but also the nature and results of your chosen relationships. With this the practical judgment of men agrees. Society will hold you responsible for the company that you keep, and those who would employ you will be profoundly influenced in the choice or refusal of your services by the character of your associates; when Hal becomes King Henry, he must cut Falstaff and his regiment of swashbucklers. It is said that Pythagoras, the ancient Greek philosopher, before he admitted any one into his school, inquired who were his intimates, naturally concluding that they who could choose immoral companions would not be much profited by his

instructions. Men are not less wise now; if you keep the company of the dissipated or the corrupt, do not be surprised if those who want capable and honest assistants pass you by. The common-sense of the world appreciates the worth of integrity, and quickly presumes the lack of integrity in those who have intimacies with the unworthy.

We have no right to be exclusive in the sense that we should repel any human being who seeks aid of us or to whom we can do good; but we have the right to keep our intimacies only for those whom we can trust and whose influence upon us will be pure and conservative of honor. We have the right, nay, we are under most solemn obligation, to preserve inviolate the inmost sanctuary of the heart and mind by admitting therein no profane and polluting fellowship. This does not abridge in the least a true love of all our fellow-men. God loves all. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;" but also, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."

Our habitual companionships will be determined by our dominant aim in life and by the really master-affection of our hearts. That strange conception of Stevenson's, "Mr. Hyde

and Dr. Jekyll," has in it an element of startling truth. Our natures are capable of an appalling moral duality; yet the conception of the novelist is exaggerated, and so far false. Every man is fundamentally one thing or another; but there is always this play of action and reaction: what he is determines the character of his companionships; the character of his companionships determines what he is. No man can go far and fatally wrong who has chosen the supreme good as the goal of his life; no one can form permanent evil fellowships who has learned what it is to have fellowship with the divine man, Jesus Christ. His pure presence in the heart is the perfect moral antiseptic; that will make evil companionships impossible for you, as it also will make you worthy of the love and confidence of all men. Intimate companionship with him will enable you to give, as it will qualify you to receive, the best thing on earth,—an enduring, pure, and wholly beneficent friendship.

TEMPERANCE.

A WISE man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength. — *Proverbs of Solomon.*

Whatever day
Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.
The Odyssey.

He that would govern others, first should be
The master of himself.

MASSINGER.

Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. — SAINT PAUL.

In the supremacy of self-control consists one of the perfections of the ideal man. — HERBERT SPENCER.

Chain up the unruly legion of thy breast. Lead thine own captivity captive, and be Cæsar within thyself. — SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

Es ist gewiss, ein ungemässigt Leben,
Wie es uns schwere, wilde Träume giebt,
Macht uns zuletzt am hellen Tage träumen.

GOETHE.

THE study of words is both interesting and profitable; for words are more than symbols of thoughts, they are thoughts embodied, and the history of words is the history of the intellectual and moral life of man.

The word "temperance" is so commonly misunderstood and misapplied that a brief study of

it, if it does not materially add to our knowledge, will at least correct our apprehension and perhaps also our use of the word. It is from the Latin *tempero*, which means, (1) "to divide or proportion duly," and "to mix in due proportion." This sense appears in the phrase: "He is a well-tempered man." Had Shakespeare written in Latin instead of English, he would have used *tempero* in that noble passage which he puts in the mouth of Mark Antony concerning Brutus: —

"His life was gentle, and the elements
So *mix'd* in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

Tempero means, (2) "to rule, regulate, govern;" (3) "to moderate or restrain one's self;" and, (4) in the participle, to be "moderate, sober, calm, steady." The New Testament is so largely the recognized authority in practical ethics that we shall do well to look at its use of the word. "Temperance" is the common translation of the Greek *ἐγκράτεια*, a compound of *ἐν* — that is, "in" — and *κράτος*, which means power. Applied to a man, *ἐγκράτεια* expresses the idea of strength or power in him; it expresses thus the idea of moral strength, — that is, self-mastery or self-control.

In the minds of most people this word is associated almost exclusively with the idea of abstinence from the use of intoxicating liquors. A temperate man is usually understood to be one who never tastes intoxicants as a beverage, no matter what excesses he may practise in other respects. "Temperance," popularly, is the equivalent of total abstinence from alcohol, and "intemperance" is the equivalent of any degree of alcoholic indulgence. Thus the truth that all excess is intemperance is blurred and even lost sight of altogether. The monstrous evils resulting from alcoholic intemperance afford both the reason and an excuse for this perversion of the word; but we shall lose nothing and shall gain much by restoring to the word its true meaning. Any man who makes excessive use of intoxicants is intemperate, whether the quantity he uses be small or great. Excess is determined not by quantity alone, but by the degree of the user's sensitiveness to stimulants. The responsible relations in which he stands both to God and to human society demand the continuous preservation of his moral and physical self-possession, and any use of intoxicants which prevents that is excessive. On the other hand temperance is not to be identified with moderate use,—that is, a man is not bound

to use alcohol moderately in order to be temperate. Temperance is self-control, and he who abstains wholly from intoxicating drinks is, in this particular matter, a temperate man; while he who takes only an occasional glass may be, so far, an intemperate man. Any indulgence is intemperance in the case of some men; it is intemperance in the case of any man who thereby prejudices his physical or moral health, or menaces the well-being of his neighbor. Certainly the man who by the excessive use of alcohol has laid the foundation of a morbid appetite, or has inherited a morbid susceptibility to stimulants, is intemperate if he makes any use as a beverage of that which will revive his appetite. Entire abstinence is the only safe, and therefore the only right, course for some men, and the only surety of self-control.

It must not be forgotten that the evil nature of an act lies not only in the motive of the doer, but also in the consequences of the act. This fundamental ethical principle is often ignored in discussions of the temperance question. Experience shows that, quicker than almost any other physical agent, alcohol breaks down a man's power of self-control. The physical evils of intemperance, great as they are, are slight compared with the moral evils. It is not

simply that vices and crimes almost inevitably follow on the loss of rational self-direction, which is the invariable accompaniment of intoxication ; manhood is lowered and finally lost by the sensual tyranny of appetite. The drunken man has given up the reins of his nature to a fool or a fiend, and he is driven fast to base or unutterably foolish ends. The temperate man keeps the reins in his own hands, and resists the first encroachment on his rational and moral liberty. He will not become a traitor to the high sovereignty of his own divinely given self-hood.

But the idea of temperance covers a wide field ; it stands in direct relation to many forms of self-indulgence besides that of indulgence in stimulants. In fact temperance relates not primarily to the thing which a man does, but to the man ; it is opposed to excess of every sort, — to excess in eating and drinking, in working and playing, in speaking and thinking. Temperance is sometimes confounded with moderation ; but moderation is rather the result of temperance, — that is, of self-control. As belonging primarily to the man rather than to the thing which a man does, temperance is a quality of character. In its highest form it belongs only to the good man ; no one can be temperate in sinning.

One may sin less than another, but all sin is excess; he who sins exceeds the limits of right conduct. Temperance is not perfect until it is so complete that it prevents all wrong action or impulse.

Temperance, then, is self-control. It is physical and mental and moral self-possession and self-direction; it is that quality, that power, in a man by which he successfully resists the mastering of himself by any thing or any influence which is of less worth than himself, — an intelligent, moral personality, at once the subject and the child of God. It is immediately related to all the virtues. Bishop Hall, using the word “moderation” in the sense of self-control, said: “Moderation is the silken string running through the pearl chain of all virtues.” It makes character symmetrical, and conduct consistent with right principle; it is the unifying force, the internal ruler, that regulates the activities of imagination and affection and will. It is intimately related with knowledge. Socrates said: “There is no difference between knowledge and temperance [*ἐγκράτεια*], for he who knows what is good and embraces it, who knows what is bad and avoids it, is learned and temperate. But they who know very well what ought to be done, and yet

do otherwise, are ignorant and stupid." The brilliant but sadly inconsistent Stoic philosopher, Seneca, inculcated, if he did not always practise, a true temperance. He declared: "I will have a care of being a slave to myself, for it is a perpetual, a shameful, and the heaviest of all servitudes." Saint Paul, contemporary with Seneca, inculcated and practised a temperance grounded in the absolute subjection of self to God and to the spiritual aims of life. In his letter to the Corinthians, he reminded them that those who contended in the games for a prize were temperate. The illustration was homely, but striking and suggestive; the wrestler or runner, in preparing for the contest, must bring himself wholly into subjection to the laws of physical health and development. He must rigorously control all his habits of living, — of eating and drinking and sleeping, of resting and exercising. He must control also his passions and his moods; for he must have not only physical soundness and strength, but also presence of mind, alertness, courage, and perseverance. All of these qualities are needed in the arena; he who is deficient in any of them risks failure and defeat. Human life is a contest, a race, an agony [*ἀγωνία*] as the Greeks called it, and it demands a moral disci-

pline and self-mastery like that of the athlete. We are in the world to develop character; and we are surrounded by hostile influences which we must overcome in order to become true men and women. We have weaknesses within which must be supplanted by disciplined strength. We have physical appetites which, properly ruled, are sources of pleasure, and ministrant to our well-being, but which, if allowed to rule us, will involve us in a bondage that is both degrading and destructive. We have faculties of mind and heart which, regulated and trained in accordance with moral law, are elements of both power and greatness, but ungoverned are sources and instruments of mischief to ourselves and others. God evidently means that we shall "live in the spirit," — that is, with our spiritual faculties regnant, and our spiritual interests uppermost. It is His will that we should be served by the flesh, and not be its servants; that every faculty and passion of our natures shall be under the control of a right will, and so ministrant to our best life. In its highest sense temperance is a holy self-government of our entire nature — of body, mind, and spirit — in accordance with the will of God.

A true self-control involves, then: (1)

Control of the physical appetites. Such control is absolutely necessary to right living. I do not counsel asceticism; Christianity does not prescribe asceticism, — on the contrary, asceticism is opposed to that full, rounded, vigorous life of which Christianity gives us the ideal. But in every man who would live as he ought to live, there must be something of the force and fibre which enter into the character of the ascetic. “All things are lawful for me,” said Saint Paul; “but I will not be mastered by any.” There is the truly temperate man, in whom, by long discipline, self-control has become easy and inevitable. On every side the thoughtful observer of life discovers examples of the ruin that is wrought by lust, — that is, by appetite which has become excessive. Not only are natural appetites given rein until they have grown monstrous and despotic, but artificial appetites are created which, like a ghastly Frankenstein, develop a kind of independent life and force, and then turn on their creator to torment him without pity.

The appetite for intoxicants, if not wholly artificial in some cases, is yet so perverted and exaggerated that it has all the character of an unnatural and external despot.

The thoroughly subjugated victim of strong drink is almost the most pitiable creature on earth; he becomes half beast or half demon. In the place of sweet, human reasonableness comes a maudlin idiocy or a maudlin fury. What a mute confession of unspeakable degradation there is in the very appearance of a confirmed sot! Behold a man no longer in possession of himself! The flesh is master; the spiritual nature is choked in the mire of sensuality; and the mental faculties are a mere mob of enfeebled powers under bondage to a bestial or mad tyrant.

Young men, let drink alone; not because it is a sin to take a glass of wine, but because it is a sin and a shame for you to abdicate your manhood under the influence of a morbid appetite which you must either create by immoral excess, or which, having been created by prenatal influences, you must waken and nurse by indulgence before it has the fatal power to bind you hand and foot.

But there are other appetites which are just as imperious and, perhaps, quite as harmful as the appetite for intoxicants. The latter seems specially evil because of the rapidity and completeness with which it breaks down self-control and debauches the moral nature. But all

appetites, the natural as well as the artificial, which exist in most cases only by our fault, should be subject to reason and conscience and will. They have no right to mastery. Settle early the question which is to be your master, your body or you. It is no such easy question to settle as you may suppose; for the very strength of your nature, on the passional side, enhances the difficulty. The question is never effectually and finally settled until you are willingly ruled by a high, moral purpose; and until it is settled you have no self-control which will insure any real and permanent success in life. Hate not the body; prize it rather, and nourish and develop it, but keep it under. Like fire, it is a good servant, but a ruinous master.

(2) Self-control involves also command of one's faculties and dispositions. Skill in any work is the result of a full self-possession; it is such grasp and command of one's powers as enables him to direct them efficiently to a desired end. It is his physical self-control that enables the skilful mechanic to make his hands and his tools do exactly what he plans. The same tools in the hands of one lacking such self-control are almost useless and sometimes even dangerous. It is physical self-control

that enables the accomplished musician to execute with precision and power the melody which is in his soul. Technical skill of every sort is the result and expression of control over one's own physical capabilities.

Self-control is, therefore, necessary to effectiveness; it is the generalship which turns a mob of raw recruits into a disciplined army. Many a man is blundering and ineffective in all his endeavors because he has never come into command of himself: his powers are untrained; he can do nothing well; he has no method; he does not possess himself. The discipline which is the main end in education is simply self-control acquired over one's mental faculties; without this discipline no man is a strong and accurate thinker.

But dispositions as well as faculties must be subdued to order. A prime quality of good character is the power to control one's moods, — his feelings and temper. Many persons are intemperate in their feelings; they are emotionally prodigal. Passionateness is intemperance; so also is caprice, and subjection to evil or unwholesome moods. There is an intemperance in melancholy and in mirth. "The laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns under a pot." But the mirthful fool is not worse than

the melancholy fool. It is true that our moods are much affected by our circumstances; that is inevitable. But the temperate man is not mastered by his moods; he will not be driven or enticed into excess; his steadfast will conquers despondency, and is not unbalanced by transient exhilarations. Temper is subjected to reason and conscience. How many people excuse themselves for doing wrong or foolish acts by the plea that they have a quick temper? But he who is king of himself rules his temper, turning its very heat and passion into energy that works good instead of evil. Stephen Girard, when he heard of a clerk who had a strong temper, would readily take him into his employ. Girard believed that such persons, properly controlled, — that is, taught self-control, — were the best workers. Temper is an element of strength; wisely regulated it spends itself as energy in work, just as heat in an engine is transmuted into the force that drives the wheels of industry and commerce. Cromwell, William the Silent, Washington, and Wellington were men of prodigious temper; but they were also men whose self-control was nearly perfect. The favorite emblem, Mr. Motley tells us, by which the friends of William the Silent expressed their sense of his firmness was,

“The rock in the ocean, tranquil amid raging billows.” How adequate is the old familiar proverb: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”

There is another sort of intemperance to which the young are prone to become addicted: it is intemperance in the exercise of the fancy or the imagination. Imagination is a marvelous and most precious endowment of the human mind; but it is susceptible of extraordinary and exceedingly harmful abuses. It glorifies life if it is pure and noble, and chastened by a strong sense of truth and righteousness; if it is impure, and unruled by conscience, it envelopes the soul in a splendid but fatal corruption. Uncontrolled by reason and the moral sense, it saps the best energies of the mind by leaving them inactive; it perverts judgment by false representations of life; it debauches the heart by the creation of unclean pictures in which vice is garnished with a powerful and baleful beauty; it becomes, in the service of lust,—

“Procuress to the lords of hell.”

Many a ruined life is but the manifest result of a moral deterioration which began in an

intemperate imagination; deeds were done in fancy from which as facts the soul would have shrunk in horror, until at last, by an inevitable process, fancy has become fact. What orgies of illicit pleasure are carried on in many a heart! I tell you, young men, there are few perils to youth greater than those which arise from an unchastened and ungoverned imagination. A true self-control lays a powerful constraining hand on that fertile and dangerous faculty, and subjects it as rigorously as it does conduct to the law of conscience. "Keep the imagination sane," said Hawthorne, "that is one of the truest conditions of communion with Heaven." When Goethe wrote: "Es ist nichts fürchterlicher als Einbildungskraft ohne Geschmack," — there is nothing more fearful than imagination without taste, — he surely was thinking of "that good taste which is the conscience of the mind, and that conscience which is the good taste of the soul."

(3) Self-control involves also command of one's practical activities. Scarcely less important than temperance in the indulgence of our appetites and passions, is temperance in speech and in work. These two, speech and work, are our prevailing forms of expression; we impress ourselves on the world about us by what we

say and what we do. Intemperance in speech is a common vice, and it is one prolific of grave evils. Words are forces in human society. An apostle said: "Be swift to hear; slow to speak; slow to wrath." Hasty, ill-considered speech is one of the most fruitful sources of suffering; gossip and slander are more powerful for mischief than robbery and arson. The intemperate tongue Saint James describes as "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Families, churches, and communities have been rent in pieces by the ungoverned tongue; friends have been parted or turned into foes by evil-speaking. The wise control of the tongue has a powerful influence on the whole life. Saint James says: "In many things we all offend. If any one offends not in word, this is a perfect man, able to bridle also the whole body." It is as if he had said that he who has learned how to be temperate in speech has mastered the secret of temperance in all things. The man who is intemperate in drink often harms himself more than he does any one else; but the man who is intemperate in speech harms first and most his fellow-man.

Intemperance in work is also a common vice, especially in our time and country. Though not as despicable and mischievous a vice as the former, it is nevertheless a vice, and it works

great harm. Many men do not control their work; they are controlled by it. Such men do not live; they drudge in a wearing bondage. Work, work, work, is the sum-total of their lives. They rob their families of that generous, affectional intercourse which is worth more than any amount of wealth. Their day has no breadth of horizon, and is void of beauty and song. They do much, but what they do is despoiled of more than half its value by their failure to become the cultivated, ample personalities that they might become. Society suffers, the Church suffers, and the nation suffers by the sacrifice of capacious and many-sided manhood which intemperance in work demands. Work is not an end, but a means to an end. It is a wretched subversion of true human interests to turn life into a mere grind of unilluminated toil. Wealth, as accumulated money is miscalled, is not worth its cost when it costs life. I know that the preacher on this theme speaks to many deaf ears. The gold-god casts a powerful spell over his devotees, and I fear that the day is still distant when men will work that they may live, instead of living that they may work. But the truth has a more powerful advocate than the preacher's voice; the wrecking of many a life before its prime, in premature break-down, ner-

vous prostration, heart-failure, and suicide speaks with a force greater than that of any sermon.

Let me now summarize this counsel of wisdom as to the practical conduct of life. Be temperate in your pleasures; make them recreative incidents in the serious business of living. Rule appetite with a strong hand, and persistently keep the body in its true place. Be temperate in your feeling; do not be stoics; strong feeling is an important element in a noble character; but rule feeling by reason and conscience. Do not suppress passion and imagination, but let them loose on noble ends.

Be temperate in judgment and speech. Put a bridle on the tongue, and keep the reins in a firm and watchful grasp. Be temperate in work. Let the thing you do be done with all your might; pour out your enthusiasm and energy in unstinted streams, but always under such control that your work will not harness and drive you as a mere slave. In one word, be men, self-controlled and patient and strong,—always stronger than your passions, always better than your speech, always superior to your task. In Sir Thomas Browne's fine phrase: "Be Cæsar within thyself."

Remember that all conduct begins within. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Out

of the heart proceed the thoughts and motives which are the mainspring of all deeds. If the inner kingdom of a man's heart is rightly governed, all his conduct will be right and good.

A true self-control in relation to things evil enforces abstinence; in relation to things lawful it enforces moderation. Such a self-control produces and evinces a harmonious and balanced character; it insures true enjoyment of pleasure, efficiency in work, patience and resourcefulness under adversity, and chastened gladness in success.

Such is the temperance inculcated by Jesus Christ. If you have attained this temperance you will never be the slave of appetite; you will be free from the loathsome bonds of lust; you will command with ease the various faculties of your minds. Your heart will escape the oppression of sombre moods, and the dissipation of foolish and unwholesome fancies, and you will experience the calm and sweet satisfaction of conscious integrity before God and men. You will feel within you, as Shakespeare puts it:

“A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience.”

For truly, as Milton said: —

“ He that has light within his own clear breast,
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun,
Himself is his own dungeon.”

How shall you attain such self-control as I have described? The answer now must be brief, and, fortunately, it need not be long. The secret of true self-control is in a right education of the mind, in discipline of the will, and in development of the spiritual nature. Accept intelligently, and never reject without well-considered and well-grounded reasons the restraints which are thrown about you by home and society. Many a young man is impatient to be his own master; the authority of parent or guardian becomes irksome, and he longs for the hour when he can take the reins of his life wholly into his own hands. “ But too often,” as Hare has said, “ he who is impatient to become his own master, when the outward checks are removed, only becomes his own slave, — the slave of a master in the insolent flush of youth, hasty, headstrong, wayward, and tyrannical. Had he really become his own master, the first act of his dominion over himself would have been to put himself under the dominion of a higher Master and a wiser.” It is only he who has

learned to obey who is fitted and able to command.

Discipline your wills by choosing to do the difficult, right deed with promptness and unflinching courage; form the habit of mastering yourselves in the daily experiences of the home and the school. Life is a moral gymnasium with all the appliances for training the moral forces in you to strength and efficiency; spring to the magnificent task of making yourselves upright, pure, and generous men. You prize manliness; you believe in virtue; you desire to give a good account of yourselves in the arena and conflict of life,—put yourselves voluntarily under subjection to the one supreme Master of the art of right living; be obedient, chivalrous followers and imitators of Jesus Christ. For not good resolutions alone, not mere hard will-work alone, will certainly bring you into a clear mastery of yourselves; you need the inspiration of a personal faith, a personal love, and a personal enthusiasm. You need, too, the help that comes through the appeal of God to your spiritual nature; that appeal is made in the matchless character of Jesus Christ. Subjection to him is entrance into freedom and power. The poet Tennyson exclaimed in passionate faith: —

The Aim of Life.

“ Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove ;

.
Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours to make them thine.”

The divine control of us through faith and love makes possible a true self-control; in the deepest sense the moral man must be the religious man. Our virtues that stand the stress and storm of the world are rooted in our souls' deep sense of God. Temperance is not a mere utilitarian virtue; it is a power and perfection of character the sources of which are the same as the sources of that faith which lifts man triumphant at last over all ills in life and in death.

DEBT.

THOSE have short Lent who owe money to be paid at Easter.
— FRANKLIN.

Debt is like any other trap, easy enough to get into, but hard enough to get out. — H. W. SHAW.

The man who never has money enough to pay his debts has too much of something else. — J. L. BASFORD.

His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

LONGFELLOW.

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. — *Proverbs of Solomon.*

Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. — SAINT PAUL.

THE word "debt" is an abbreviation of *debitum*, a Latin word, the perfect participle of *debeo*, which means "to owe something, to be in debt," and then, more broadly, "to be under obligation, to be bound by duty." It is probably cognate with the Anglo-Saxon *doefe, doefte*, "fit or convenient," which appears in our modern English as "deft." Wedgwood in his etymo-

logical dictionary says, "The Latin *debeo* is fundamentally to be explained as signifying 'it falls to me to do so and so.'" In its general sense, then, *debeo* means "I owe," or "I ought." The root-idea of these two phrases is the same. "Ought" is the old preterite, or past tense, of the verb "owe." Usage has changed so that now we say: present, "I owe;" past, "I owed;" whereas the old usage was: present, "I owe;" past, "I ought." "Ought" has now become a distinct verb, and expresses with greater depth and force than any other word in our language the august authority of the moral idea.

"Owe" is the original, from the Anglo-Saxon, of the verb "own," which means "to possess." In old English "owe" was used as we now use "own;" as for example, in Shakespeare: —

"Thou dost here usurp
The name thou ow'st not."

To owe came to mean, by ellipsis, to possess something for another; so that now that which is *owed* is something that belongs to another, while that which is *owned* is a personal possession. Debt is something which is owed to another, — that is, owned, held in trust, for another, — and which ought to be paid.

So "debt" and "duty" are cognate words;

for duty means that which is due, — that is, it is a debt.

I have gone somewhat into detail in this study of words in order that you may see clearly how much the word "debt" involves. It is a weighty word, expressing moral obligation and revealing moral law. But for conscience there would be no such word as debt; but for moral law there would be no conscience; but for God there would be no moral law. Many of our commonest words, like this word "debt," strike their roots down into the very foundations of moral life, and bear testimony to man's primal relation, as a moral being, to God. Few people think that every time they use the word "debt" they are unconsciously witnessing to the power of conscience, the authority of moral law, and the being and sovereignty of God.

On the other hand, many of our words are involuntary witnesses to human passion and selfishness, to human ignorance and guile, and to the perversion of human life and character by vice and sin.

Men shrink sometimes from the seeming exaggeration and injustice of Jesus's saying: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned;" but this saying expresses the profoundest insight, and is sup-

ported by the solidest reasoning. As individual men express their characters in their habitual speech, so a people writes its moral history in its language. A word is but a vibration of the air, a pulse of sound, or a figure stamped on paper, yet it can wound like a knife or heal like balsam; it may shine with the light of truth and love, or glow with the lurid fire of passion and hate; it may be a revelation of virtue and faith, or it may disclose wickedness that has become unconscious habit.

“ Words are mighty, words are living :
Serpents with their venomous stings,
Or bright angels, crowding round us,
With heaven’s light upon their wings ;
Every word has its own spirit,
True or false, that never dies ;
Every word man’s lips have uttered
Echoes in God’s skies.”

1. The word “ debt ” has a well-known specific meaning. As commonly used, it refers to money or goods or service which one person, on account of an equivalent already received, is under obligation to render to another. This we may call its commercial sense. The consideration of debt falls within the domain of practical ethics, because debt is essentially moral. It could not exist if men were not moral beings ; it

cannot be conceived of as existing among beasts. Properly a debt is a moral obligation ; but in the relations which men sustain to each other as members of a common political society and under the authority of civil laws, sometimes debt exists formally where it does not actually. Through injustice or dishonesty, through the abuse of power or the exercise of cunning, men often take advantage of each other, and make demands for that which is not morally due ; and these demands they are able legally to enforce. Thus there are, we may say, three kinds of specific debt : —

(1) That which one is legally but not morally bound to pay ;

(2) That which one is morally but not legally bound to pay ; and

(3) That which one is both legally and morally bound to pay.

With reference to the first kind of debts which one is legally but not morally bound to pay, it may be remarked that they are not true debts ; they do not immediately signify duties. They are misfortunes, the results perhaps of carelessness, or even of selfishness. No obligation to pay such debts inheres in the debts themselves ; but there may be obligation to pay them arising from the duty of maintaining the

laws, even though, through imperfection, the laws sometimes work injustice to the individual, or from the duty of yielding a right before the higher right of preserving peace and morally benefiting another.

Such debts as are legal but not strictly moral must be dealt with according to the merits and circumstances of the particular case. As far as possible avoid such debts by a careful circumspection in your dealings with men.

There is a kind of debt of which I am loath to speak, but which the ethical teacher is compelled to notice. I refer to obligations assumed while one is in a mentally and morally irresponsible condition, — as, for example, when he is drunk, — and obligations that are assumed in betting and other forms of gambling. The laws and the courts recognize that the chief elements in an obligatory contract are wanting in both of these cases; and to a large extent they protect men from the consequences of their own folly or vice. But the moral obligation of the debtor cannot always be determined by a legal process. Two or three things are pretty clear: it is immoral to get drunk, and it is immoral to gamble; and certainly the creditor who has made himself formally such by taking advantage of another man's weakness

or ignorance, or by the arbitrament of chance, has no moral right to compel payment. But the debtor who has made himself formally such while intoxicated, or by gaming, must face the question whether the payment of the factitious debt is not a penalty for his immorality which he would better endure as a wholesome discipline; if in this way he can guard himself from a second experience, the lesson will be worth its cost. Certainly no man has a right to put himself in an irresponsible condition, and no man has a right to incur obligations, or to exact the fulfilment of obligations, that rest on no solid basis of service or value rendered for an equivalent. In gambling there is no equivalent rendered for the value received. A fine sense of honor will shrink from the whole wretched business of gaming and betting as unworthy of men. When we are more civilized we shall put betting where we have put duelling, and the question of factitious debts will pass out of the discussion of practical ethics.

With reference to the second kind of debt, — that which one is morally but not legally bound to pay, — there scarcely can be two opinions where there is sound judgment and quick conscience. Debt is duty, and laws do not make or unmake duty; they simply define

certain duties, and often do that very imperfectly. What you owe to another, that other has a right to have; for obligations on one side involve corresponding rights on the other. It is always the moral rather than the merely legal element which is predominant in a true debt. There are many men who have false ideas of the ethics of debt. A debt that does not bind them by law is considered a doubtful claim. Just as in the minds of some men an oath is more binding than a simple affirmation, and perjury a sin far exceeding in gravity the most outrageous lying, so, in some minds, the gravamen of obligation in a debt lies in the strength of the legal claim. The result is that debts often are evaded through legal defects, or repudiated because there is no power to compel their payment. The dishonesty of this is radical.

Through misfortune, which he could neither foresee nor avert, a man may be placed in such circumstances that he cannot pay his debts; and in certain cases the law mercifully and wisely steps in to save him from such utter destitution as would deprive him of power ever to recover his loss. But whether bound by legal requirement or not, the debtor is morally bound; and if he is a

true man, the only thing that will prevent him from meeting all his obligations is absolute inability.

There are many people who seem to think very lightly of debt; as though it were a small matter to be under financial obligation. Not a few have no hesitation in incurring debt without the slightest intention of ever troubling themselves about paying the debt; yet they would scorn to steal. Meanwhile it would tax a very subtle casuist to draw a valid and clear distinction between many a debtor and a thief.

Always a true debt involves moral obligation; and whether there be legal obligation or not is a small matter before the bar of conscience.

It is a lesson which multitudes need to learn, — that a debt is meant to be paid. Simple as the lesson is, even religion seems insufficient to teach it effectually to some men. Whatever human laws may say, God's law says: "Pay what thou owest!" A debt may be forgiven, and so dissolved; but it cannot be repudiated without guilt. Moral obligation is the most tenacious and persistent thing in this universe. The debt which you refuse to pay has in it a moral element that will abide when time has

gone, and the world has passed away; and it will haunt you like a condemning spirit in eternity. Man cannot die out of the sphere of moral obligation. No sophistry can extinguish a duty; no change in circumstances will soften the stern imperative of moral law.

The requirement of civil law, then, does not effect the essential quality of debt, either by its presence or absence. What is right is right; what is due is due, — whether it be recognized in the statutes of States or not.

Having laid a broad and solid ethical foundation for our thought on this theme, I wish now to give you some homely, practical suggestions concerning debt in its specific sense of an obligation to render money or goods or marketable service to another.

(1) In the first place debt is not of necessity absolutely to be avoided; sometimes one must incur debt. The relations of men to each other commercially are such that debt in some form is often proper and even unavoidable. Saint Paul wrote to the Roman Christians: "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." These words must not be construed into a command, having force for all time, never to incur financial obligations. They do imply the principle that debts are to be paid; that

men are not to be perpetually owing, but are faithfully to discharge their obligations to each other. But there was also in the apostle's words a meaning which has ceased to be pertinent. History tells us that when he wrote, the disciples of Christ in Rome were already, or were soon to be, in almost constant peril of death or pillage. Nero was emperor, and the times were uncertain and troublous. The Christian was like a lamb among wolves. The whole world was hostile; its customs and laws, social and civil, were in many respects violently opposed to the Christian scheme of life. It behooved Christians to live as minute-men, unencumbered and ready for any emergency. In harmony with this was the apostle's exhortation to the believers in Corinth: "This I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; *and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.*" Undoubtedly, too, these and similar counsels were prompted by the belief, which Saint Paul for a time shared with many of his contem-

poraries, that Christ was to come again during their age and life-time to bring earthly history to a close.

The superficial meaning of these words evidently is not for times like the present, in which Christian thought increasingly shapes the laws and controls the government of society.

Debt is to-day a commercial necessity. A large part of trade is carried on by creating or assuming financial obligations. Great enterprises, individual and national, are built on credit, — the faith of man in man. Debt is not, therefore, absolutely to be avoided, though it should be incurred only in accordance with fixed moral and economic principles.

(2) The assumption of obligations to pay should be accompanied by the manifest ability to pay. It is a requisite of simple honesty that debt should be incurred only when there is a clear certainty that it can be discharged. No man and no government has a right to make debts in excess of substantial assets. Assets may be in the form of actual values or of power to create values. The permanent economic equation is, credit proportioned to real values. As a rule debt should be avoided by the young; and it should be resolutely

avoided by all who have not in present possessions, or present power, the guaranty that the debt will be paid. Young men are prone to go in debt. Life is so full of promise to them; the future shines so bright to young eyes; youth is so richly endowed with hope and confidence, — that to incur financial obligation does not seem a very serious matter. Consequently many, thinking lightly of debt, have mortgaged their whole future, and subjected themselves to a life-long struggle to meet demands which are nearly or quite beyond their utmost power to fulfil. Discontented with present circumstances, impatient of restrictions on their desires, eager for pleasures that are costly, and ambitious to display a style of dress and living that is beyond their present means, they borrow money on pledges which are easy to make but hard to redeem, and ere long they wake up to the fact that they have spent a fortune before it is earned. Then they begin the wearisome, painful fight to atone for their folly and retrieve their lost liberty, or, disheartened, sink into perpetual discredit among their fellows, or, still worse, yield to the temptation to engage in immoral enterprises for gain.

It is surprising what ideas of financial prosperity some men have; they measure their

success by their ability to get in debt. A young man who had settled in a western town was visited, after a year or two, by an old friend from the East. When asked how he was getting on he replied: "Oh, it's a capital place; a first-rate place for a young man! When I came here I was n't worth a cent, and now I owe a thousand dollars."

Those were wise words which Horace Greeley wrote: "Hunger, cold, rags, hard work, contempt, suspicion, unjust reproach, are disagreeable; and debt is infinitely worse than them all. And if it had pleased God to spare either or all of my sons to be the support and solace of my declining years, the lesson which I should have earnestly sought to impress upon them is, 'Never run into debt! Avoid pecuniary obligation as you would pestilence or famine. If you have but fifty cents, and can get no more for a week, buy a peck of corn, parch it, and live on it, rather than owe any man a dollar.'" Greeley's life was a noble commentary on his words. He fought his way from poverty to competence, and from obscurity to an honorable fame; and I never heard that he had an unpaid debt. Many a man has condemned himself to perpetual hardship through a fatal facility in "getting trusted;" many another has sunk

into confirmed vice under the pressure of early and unmanageable debt. So too many a disaster in business has come as the direct result of carelessly incurring obligations which could not be met, and of trading on chimerical probabilities.

Like Horace Greeley, Thomas Carlyle hated debt so violently that he would not borrow even to relieve real distress, and toiled through years of ill-paid labor to win for himself a competence. The eccentric John Randolph once sprang from his seat in the House of Representatives, and exclaimed in his piercing voice: "Mr. Speaker, I have found it!" And then, in the stillness which followed this strange outburst, he added: "I have found the Philosopher's Stone; it is *pay as you go!*" It is a fact that more dishonesty, often involuntary dishonesty, is caused by recklessness in incurring debt than in almost any other way. Every young man should write it down as a fundamental principle of practical ethics, that *simple honesty demands that he shall make no debt which he cannot surely pay.* Nothing will compensate for a failure resolutely to observe this principle. No amount of genius atones for dishonesty. It is said that when Sidney Smith once went into a new neighborhood, it was

given out in the local papers that he was a man of high connections, and he was besought on all sides for his "custom." But he speedily undeceived his new neighbors. "We are not great people at all," he said; "we are only common, honest people, — people that pay our debts." Let it be ever remembered in honor of Sir Walter Scott that he sacrificed his life by his prodigious labors to pay his debts, for a large part of which he was not responsible, and to save Abbotsford, his home, and that the *Waverley Novels* are a perpetual testimony to his chivalrous regard for the sacredness of financial obligations.

I have no power adequately to depict the wretchedness and pain which have been caused by debt heedlessly incurred; every community affords abundant illustration. You all remember Dickens' character, Mr. Micawber, and what a laughable, pitiable, lovable, and contemptible character he is, ever discharging old obligations by making new ones, and fatuously fancying that one note was paid when another, bearing a more recent date, was given in its place. You remember, too, the wise words which Micawber uttered, but the wisdom of which, in his conduct, he scrupulously avoided: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual ex-

penditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery." The misery which Micawber continually experienced is representative of the misery which multitudes endure who indulge in the folly of living beyond their means. And the worst of it all is not the misery, but the actual guilt — the dishonesty before God and men — which invites and receives certain condemnation.

The writings of Benjamin Franklin are worthy of a place in every young man's library, if for no other reason, for the sake of the soundness and pointedness of his counsel on the conduct of practical affairs. "Think," he says, — "think what you do when you run in debt; you give to another power over your liberty. If you cannot pay at the time, you will be ashamed to see your creditor; you will be in fear when you speak to him; you will make poor, pitiful, sneaking excuses, and by degrees come to lose your veracity, and sink into base downright lying, — for the second vice is lying, the first is running in debt, as Poor Richard says, and again, to the same purpose, Lying rides on Debt's back."

2. I turn now, for a few minutes, to the broad meaning of debt as something which is

due, — that is, as synonymous with duty. Because man is a moral being, having intimate and responsible relations with his fellow-creatures and with God, he is subject to duty. Under a comprehensive and beneficent moral law he is in debt to all men and to God. This debt is permanent; it is not extinguished by payment, for it rises freshly into existence with every moment of life. We do not assume this debt, nor can we throw it off. We may refuse to acknowledge it wholly or in part; but its claim is never relaxed, and, unlike financial debts in some States, it is never outlawed. No man is or ever can be clear of it; it inheres in the very nature of his moral being and relations. There is no difference, with reference to this fundamental fact of moral life, between the Christian and the heathen, between believer and unbeliever. The one may recognize and acknowledge what he owes to his fellow-men and to God, and the other may not; but the recognition does not make the debt, nor does the lack of recognition unmake it. Every man is bound to live justly and benevolently toward other men, and reverently and righteously toward God. The fact that the best men do this imperfectly does not affect the obligation, does not make it less than absolutely imperative and everlasting. Salva-

tion is the process of coming into that perfection of moral life which this obligation implies as the true ideal and destiny of man.

There are many erroneous ideas with respect to the scope of moral obligation. It is said sometimes that the Christian ought to be better than the unchristian man, and the preacher better than the pew-holder. Properly qualified this statement is true, but unless thus qualified it is not true, it is even absurdly false. Every one is bound to be the best in character and conduct that is possible for him to be. The confessed follower of Christ ought to exemplify the virtues and graces of his Master; but is it not true that the rejector of Christ should also exemplify these virtues and graces? Does the Christian's recognition of his duty constitute his duty? The truth is simply that the former openly recognizes in some measure what he ought to do and be, while the latter does not. There is no escape from obligation by refusing to acknowledge obligation; otherwise there would be an end of all virtue. God is no respecter of persons; moral law is universal. Duty is as broad as humanity. A chief function of Christianity is to teach and convince men that they all should obey God, that they all should follow the mind of Christ, that they all should turn from sin and live the beautiful life

of holiness. God's love regards not a favored few, but the whole human race ; so God's claim rests not on the few, but on all. Obligation is not nullified by denial of it. There is no hiding-place for the soul that repudiates the claims of duty ; there is no recess in this universe where the authority of moral law does not penetrate, — it is as pervasive and omnipresent as the atmosphere.

Have clearly in mind that there is one debt which rests on you all. It is neither unequal nor transient. It is not a burden, but a blessing ; for it is the necessary condition of happiness and peace. When oughtness is met by willingness heaven is begun. "Great peace," said the Psalmist, grasping this truth, — "great peace have they who love thy law."

Often a distinction is made between duty to our fellow-men and duty to God ; but there is no real distinction. The New Testament clearly recognizes that all duties are to God, and that pure love and service to humanity are the true worship.

But the formal distinction between philanthropy and religion is convenient for purposes of discussion.

(1) We are debtors, then, to our fellow-men. We owe them love and helpfulness in their toils

and struggles; sympathy in their sorrows, and service in their need. We owe it to them to practise virtue and charity, to afford them an elevating example, to share with them our blessings, and to impart to them our joys. The claims of a common humanity are continuous. The debt is persistent; it is not discharged by any single act of beneficence, but only by a life of constant generous service. All great souls have recognized in some measure the debt. Saint Paul said of himself: "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." The *altruism* of modern scientific thought is but the tardy recognition of the law of Christ, which is the universal moral law.

(2) We are debtors to God. He gives us being and power, and the capacity for blessedness. We owe Him reverence and love and obedience; we owe Him the joyful worship of pure hearts. He claims this from us, and emphasizes His claim by the revelation of His nature and will in the person and life of Jesus Christ. His claim is uttered in the law given on Sinai; it is sung in the evangel at Bethlehem; it is breathed in the dying prayer of the crucified Jesus; it is trumpeted in the Apostolic call to repentance; it is voiced in the psalms

of the redeemed who chant the praises of "the Lamb" in the Apocalypse. Every gift of God to us is a witness and evidence of our debt. Every sunrise proclaims it; every common blessing, such as life and air and food and power of limb and faculty of mind, attests it; every deliverance from peril or temptation declares it. Our debt to God finds expression in every holy hymn that makes melody amid the discords and strifes of the world. Every church spire pointing to the skies is a mute witness to it; every prayer acknowledges it. It is the one thing that makes the life of man intelligible and sacred.

Our life does not begin to take on dignity and significance until, in some way, we apprehend and acknowledge our debt to God. Subjection to this debt is not bondage, but liberty. It is to the soul what air is to the lungs, and light to the eye, and red blood to the beating heart.

But the debt is one; it is the duty of living in that love of man which is religion, that love of God which is philanthropy. Shun all debts but this. Recognize this and welcome it as the sign of your divine kinship and destiny, and pour out your life in glad and continuous and ever-increasing payment.

THE TRUE ARISTOCRACY.

VIRTUE alone is true nobility. — JUVENAL.

Whoe'er amidst the sons
Of reason, valor, liberty, and virtue,
Displays distinguished merit, is a noble
Of Nature's own creating.

THOMSON.

Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

TENNYSON.

You may depend upon it that there are as good hearts to serve men in palaces as in cottages. — ROBERT OWEN.

A king can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that ;
But an honest man 's aboon his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa' that !
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that.

BURNS.

High-dizened, most expensive persons, Aristocracy so-called, or *Best* of the world, beware, beware what proofs you are giving here of betterness and bestness ! A select populace, with money in its purse, and drilled a little by the posture-master : good Heavens ! — CARLYLE.

Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister ; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. — JESUS CHRIST.

THE use of the adjective "true" implies that there is a false aristocracy. Almost every good thing in the world has its counterfeit; and almost every evil institution or custom in human society is a prophetic or reminiscent counterfeit or caricature of a good institution or custom. The word "aristocracy" has primarily a political significance. It is from two Greek words, *ἄριστος*, "the best," and *κράτος*, "power;" whence *ἀριστοκρατία*, which means the rule of the best. Webster defines "aristocracy" as "A governing body composed of the best men in the state," and then significantly adds concerning this definition: "*Obsolete and very rare.*" Such is the sense of the word in Ben Jonson's lines: —

"If the Senate
Right not our quest in this, I will protest them
To all the world *no aristocracy.*"

Commonly the word has designated a privileged class of people who claimed superiority and rulership over the multitude by virtue of an assumed distinction in blood and consequent rights.

Intrinsically the aristocratic idea has a foundation in justice and the well-being of man. The best ought to rule; the best ought to set the

pattern of living to the multitude. And undoubtedly, at some times, there has been an approach to the realization of this idea. There have been prophetic moments in the history of various nations when the best did rule; when those who were fittest in intelligence and character gave the law politically and socially to the masses. But often the "best" has meant simply the strongest or the most crafty, or the richest and proudest. Then the aristocrats, instead of the best, were really the worst, because they used their larger intelligence and power for selfish ends and in tyrannous ways. History tells us how the aristocracy in many lands became an arrogant and exclusive caste founded on circumstances of birth and inheritance, and allied itself with the worst forms of despotism.

Such was the case, for example, in France antecedent to the Revolution. Aristocracy, as a specific form of government, has been rare and transitory; but as a caste it has been well-nigh universal. In its radical sense it is not inconsistent with democracy, for in a wise democracy the best will be chosen by the people to administer the government. But the term "aristocracy" has become almost inseparably associated with the idea of a privileged and usually a titled class in which were fostered notions that are

inimical to democracy, and, indeed, to a broad humanity. In America, where there is no titled class called "the nobility," the aristocratic idea has survived, and has produced classes that claim superiority on the ground of various distinctions, — for example, on the ground of certain social traditions handed down through several generations, or on actual or imaginary descent from a "noble" family of the Old World, or on inherited wealth and the social eminence which the possession of money gives. In the Southern States the aristocratic idea was joined with the assumed right to own slaves. Sometimes, also, there have appeared aristocratic pretensions based on political position and service. The worst form of the aristocratic idea is that which rests solely, or mainly, on the distinction of large wealth. This form has become the most serious menace of free popular government. In our daily speech we hear the ominous terms, "railroad kings," and "coal barons," and the like. But I do not propose now to discuss the relation of the aristocratic idea to civil government.

The word "aristocracy" expresses a true and valuable idea. As *the rule of the best*, it takes its place among the lofty ideals of the individual and of society. The true idea of

aristocracy is the primitive idea raised to the high level of Christian morality. It is the possession and exercise of power by the best. The best are the most capable, the most generous, the wisest, and the purest. Such ought to rule; such ought to wield the great formative and guiding forces of human society. This is but saying that the progress of man is toward the supremacy of truth and goodness, and the ideal of society is the Kingdom of God. There is a deep and prophetic insight in Carlyle's words: "All that Democracy ever meant lies there: the attainment of a truer and truer *Aristocracy*, or government by the *Best*."

The rule of the best implies the prevalence of righteousness, or the love of God and the love of man, in all who direct the course of human thought and conduct. The best are the holiest, — that is, the most nearly whole in all that constitutes true manhood. The rulership which these are to exercise is not the rulership of mere power; nor is it dependent on material means and forces, as of riches and armies, — but it is the rulership of moral influence inhering in moral excellence. In one word, it is a rulership of service. The highest idea of excellence that man has ever attained has come to him concretely expressed in the person of

Jesus Christ. He was recognized by his disciples, he is recognized by ever-increasing numbers of men, as the rightful Teacher and Lord; and no ideal does Jesus more completely fill than that of the Great Servant. His testimony was: "I came not to be ministered unto but to minister." The ideas of God which men have cherished illustrate the progress of men in moral perception. Of old the dominant element in the idea of God was power. Taught by Jesus Christ, we perceive that the dominant element in the true idea of God is love; and service is the expression of love, or love in action. God is the supreme Aristocrat, and His rule is the rule of the absolutely best. God does not rule men by mere Almightyness, but by goodness; His government over moral beings is a ministration of service. Christ's giving himself for the salvation of the world was the great typical divine act; it was revelatory of the whole divine method. It was not an exceptional feature of God's relation to men save in its form; it was simply the appearance and realization in time of that divine love-nature and love-impulse which has no limitations of time and place, but was "before the foundations of the world," and will be when the world has become a memory.

With this self-sacrifice all of Christ's teachings and actions are consonant. In Him we have set before us both the elements and the legitimate uses of true power. To be good is to be mighty; to rule is to serve. The escutcheon of the Prince of Wales bears the motto, *Ich dien*, I serve. That is the fundamental idea of real kingship. The worth of power lies in its subjection to the behests of holy love. Omnipotence even has value only as it is the investment of absolute goodness. Jesus Christ was the mightiest of men because he was the best of men, — because he was pre-eminently the servant. He said to his disciples, after an illustrative act of humblest service: "Ye call me Teacher and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." If the lowest form of service is characteristic of the divine manhood of Jesus, much more is the highest form, which has its striking symbol in the cross. We are apt, from very reverence, to push off into a realm apart the culminating act of Jesus's ministry to the world, his self-sacrifice on Calvary, and separate it, in our thoughts, from the realm of example and instruction; but Jesus is nowhere so expressly and impres-

sively the Teacher and Lord of men as in that act by which he lays down his life for the world. The apostle argues rightly that we ought also to lay down our lives for our fellow-men. The sacrifice of Jesus is more than a mystery for the contemplation of adoring faith; it is a formula for daily living. The history of the personalities whose service to humanity has brightened and bettered the world through all the centuries, as well as the life and teaching of Jesus, make plain the truth that the constitutive elements of real greatness are moral, that goodness alone is true power, and that sovereignty and service are not antithetical but correlative terms.

Men aspire for greatness, and crave power; they seek pre-eminence among their fellow-men; and Jesus and the saints of all ages say to them: "Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your minister; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your servant." In these words is expressed the true idea of aristocracy, — the best rule, because the best serve. Selfishness prompts continually to self-service, but selfishnesses can never achieve greatness, nor can it be enduringly powerful. From the spiritual point of view Satan is the embodiment of irremediable weakness.

The apostle says that Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy the Devil and all his works; and is not the process of destruction going on in the increasing recognition by men of the truth that selfishness is weakness, and only love is indestructible and invincible?

We have now got our point of view. The true aristocracy is composed of those who have attained, or who aspire to, eminence in power to serve their fellow-men according to the spirit and law of Jesus Christ. To this aristocracy belong all who have mastered the selfishness that is the bane of human life, and, in whatever sphere they may labor, make all their work beneficent by animating it with a purpose to do good to the world. The fundamental idea of the false aristocracy is, that service to self is the legitimate and chief object of desire and endeavor. "Other men may serve; I must be served. Other men may toil; I must receive the fruits of their toil. Other men may suffer; I must have pleasure and immunity from care." In its subtler forms the false aristocratic spirit manifests itself in contempt for poverty and plainness of person and dress, in scorn of the simple, common relations and pleasures of life, and in disregard of the more robust virtues. It is marked by a pride that, assuming to be

noble, is often cruel. It measures men and women, not by their own real worth, but by the accident of birth, or position, or possessions; and it counts the bronzed face and toil-worn hand and ill-cut coat as marks of a lower order. Often in the Old-World aristocracies there was something genuinely noble; for with eminence of station was joined eminence in generosity, and chivalrous regard for the happiness and well-being of the humble. A true nobility coined the phrase *noblesse oblige*. But the aristocracy of mere wealth has often been marked by a spirit that was arrogant and selfish.

The question of real importance is not: What are your antecedents; what are your social connections; or what are you worth? But, what are *you* in quality of mind and heart, in purpose and aim? You may be the son or daughter of "a hundred earls;" you may walk in the most brilliant circles of fashion; you may have the wealth of a Rothschild or a Gould, — but if you have not truth and honor and, above all, love for your fellow-men, the humblest soul that lives not for self but for humanity and God takes rank above you. The spirit of Jesus Christ puts on a man the mark of a finer distinction than even the most splen-

did genius. The man or woman who has most fully developed the disposition and capacity to serve, belongs to God's nobility.

Springing out of the true idea of aristocracy — that it is the rule of the best, that the best are the good, and that their rulership is eminence in service — are several practical thoughts to which I ask your serious attention.

1. *The true aristocrat is not ashamed to work.* By many labor is deemed essentially ignoble, — especially if it be manual labor; but man was created for action and achievement. The Hebrew law-giver, in the simple and massive legislation which his inspired mind devised for the government of his people, said: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work." The command was positive, not merely negative. The prohibition of labor on the seventh day was not the whole statute. A people just emancipated from bondage, under which they had suffered from an excess of toil, needed a check raised against the natural reaction which freedom would induce. Order, government, and civilization could arise only among a people incited and disciplined to voluntary labor. Most who read this old command see only the prohibition. Labor is not a curse but a blessing. The spirit of the

Mosaic precept is always manifest in the alive and growing man. Brain and hands find the world a workshop; all Nature is a store of materials. He who has not learned to do some useful task, and has not developed some profitable skill, is deficient in the first and simplest art of living. Man is the creator or producer or fashioner. Even the poet is called in the old Greek tongue *ποιήτης*, *the maker*. A divine reprobation has always rested on the indolent; he is the unprofitable servant who is "cast into outer darkness," out of the bright circle of those who know the joy of happy toil. Laziness is the primitive and least respectable, or rather, most contemptible, form of selfishness.

There always have been those who claimed, or at least assumed, the right to subsist on the labor of others. That claim often has been a prime article in the creed of titled nobilities. It underlay the pretensions and practices of slavery and of political despotism. Its fundamental source is not the circumstances of a particular age, or the character of a particular civilization, but human selfishness. It is simply the demand for service to self at whatever cost to others, and is both ignoble and wicked; for it is a practical denial of the obligation which God has laid upon every man to be a doer of that which is good.

Christianity affirms both the duty and the dignity of labor. "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." "We are workers together with God." The tasks of men take rank from their comparative beneficence, but the real dignity of labor derives from the spirit and motive of the worker. It is noble to be a factor in the great productive enterprises of the world; it is noble to be a toiler, however humble the task. I have stood sometimes on the street-corner in the evening, and watched the troops of workmen returning home from factories and mills after the day's work was done. Their clothes often were coarse and soiled, and their hands and faces begrimed with smoke and dirt; but in their solid, patient industry I saw a higher patent of nobility than any that the haughtiest count or lord who lounges his life away in the *salons* of Paris or London can boast. There is far more manliness in the brawny hand that comes calloused and scarred from honest toil in the iron-mill than in the bejewelled and immaculate fingers of the perfumed exquisite who through the fortune of inheritance, perhaps, is not compelled to work for his bread, and will not work for anything else. But the dignity of labor does not belong specially to manual labor; it belongs

to all honest, productive work, whether of hand or brain, though it is manual labor of which men are more often ashamed, and which they more readily despise.

Be workers, then, in some strong and earnest way. Make your days stand for something done. Neither heaven nor earth has any place for the drone; he is a libel on his species. No glamour of wealth or social prestige can hide his essential ugliness. It is better to carry a hod or wield a shovel in honest endeavor to be of some use to humanity, than to be nursed in luxury and be a parasite.

“Think that day lost whose low descending sun
Views from thy hand no noble action done.”

2. *The true aristocrat is ashamed to do that which is low and mean.* He will be honest not to the letter of the law, but to the level of his conscience. He will not poison his service to humanity, whatever vocation he may fill, by anything that is obnoxious to the finest sense of honor. There is often in the practical morals of men, as in money, a double standard: the one is gold; the other is silver or brass or even clay. What I mean is just this: the true man always does his best work, and always gives full weight. How often men measure their

obligation by their opportunity to evade the strict demands of righteousness! Their service to their fellow-men takes its quality not from their own pure purpose, but from the condition, the knowledge, or the power of appreciation of those whom they serve. For one man they do their best, for another they do less, saying: "Anything is good enough for him." How many times we take mean advantages of our fellow-men, and sometimes grow so blind that we think to take a mean advantage of God, — like those degenerate Hebrews whom the prophet rebuked, who offered in sacrifice the weak and the sick and the lame of their flocks. The highest ethical standard in the world is that of a genuine and deep love for man; and the true man looks not to the law nor to the defective ideas and partial opinions of his fellows, but to the claims of love for the gauge and standard of his service. There is a great deal of respectable meanness in the world; you may find it even among those who profess to be Christians. It is the meanness of trading on appearances of devotion to the good of men for the sake of private gain. The gain sought may be money, for there are those like the hypocrite whom Tennyson etches with caustic: —

“ Who never naming God except for gain,
So never took that useful name in vain ;
Made Him his cat’s-paw, and the cross his tool,
And Christ his bait to trap the dupe and fool.”

Alas, alas, to what depths of contemptible iniquity does selfishness sometimes sink the soul of man ! The Pharisee boasts of his tithing, while he “ devours widows’ houses, and for a pretence makes long prayers.” The man who wrongs you most, does it under cover of doing you a benefit.

True service rises far above this fog-bank of deceitful and pretentious selfishness, and makes its contribution to the good of men in the clear sunlight of honest, high-minded love.

“ Be what thou seemest ; live thy creed ;
Let the great Master’s steps be thine.”

Serve men without pretence ; true love is as honest as God’s sunshine. It can never stoop to the low plane of Ananias, who pledges all and secretly withholds a part of the offering.

3. *The true aristocrat is generous and chivalrous to the weak and the poor.* It was an eminent distinction of Jesus that he preached the gospel to the poor. And the gospel that he preached was not a message of mere patronizing pity and ostentatious benevolence ; it was

the love of God for men, and His Universal Fatherhood, which instantly dignified the humblest soul with the consciousness and the prerogatives of a divine sonship. He went to publicans and sinners; he made his home among the lowly. To him the distinctions of wealth and rank had absolutely no weight. Was there ever so complete a leveller? And for the most wretched he had no faintest air of contempt. Wherever he found a human soul, there he found a temple of the Holy Ghost.

The true follower of the Great Servant will love humanity apart from the accidents of place and possession. His heart will be utterly void of arrogance and scorn; he will recognize manhood and womanhood beneath the disguises of poverty or of wealth. He will be, not patronizing, but gently gracious and helpful to the poor. He will not judge, but shield and pity the erring. He will be chivalrous to woman in whatever station he finds her, and though she be fallen and ruined will cover her very sins with the mantle of his charity. The Christian man is ever the gentleman. Love is ever magnanimous; the spirit of service is a spirit of essential nobleness. How pitiful often are the religious ideals of men who, whatever their professions, have not learned of Jesus Christ. Their piety

is inflated with pride; their charity is deformed with condescension; their benevolence is poisoned with vanity; their virtue is marred with cynicism; their very love is polluted with a strain of the mercenary spirit. To how many even religion has not been a pathway to the true nobility; for true nobility is reached only by that love every pulse of which is unselfish service.

Young men and women, there is an aristocracy which abides. No revolutions can overturn it; no progress of the species can carry us beyond it; no attainments can out-rank its fine and pure distinction, — it is the aristocracy of brave, true, unselfish service to your fellow-beings in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Strive to enter into that noble order and fellowship. Let your aim in life be not to get, but to give; not to squeeze out of every circumstance and situation and opportunity some benefit for yourselves, but rather to make every pulsation of your beating hearts tributary to the increase of human knowledge and comfort and peace. Work as those sent into the world with a sacred commission to do some worthy task; work as those who see in all toil the sphere of a high consecration to noble ends; work as those who bear within them a divinely human susceptibility to

every cry of want and every plea of sorrow and pain. Take not the slave of ambition, not the victim of self-indulgent passion, not the scrambler for position and power, not the mere gold-seeker and pleasure-seeker for your model, but take the pure and chivalrous and merciful and manly and holy and divine Christ,— the servant of servants, the Son of God, — who might have grasped a world, and chose a cross that by his cross he might reconcile all men unto God, through the power of self-sacrifice and unconquerable love.

“ Since service is the highest lot,
And all are in one body bound,
In all the world the place is not
Which may not with this bliss be crowned.

• • • • •
“ The lonely glory of a throne
May yet this lowly joy preserve ;
Love may make that a stepping-stone,
And raise ‘ I reign ’ into ‘ I serve. ’ ”

EDUCATION.

HEW the block off, and get out the man. — POPE.

The true purpose of education is to cherish and unfold the seed of immortality already sown within us. — MRS. JAMESON.

The fruit of liberal education is not learning, but the capacity and desire to learn; not knowledge, but power. — C. W. ELIOT.

There is no business, no avocation whatever, which will not permit a man who has the inclination, to give a little time, every day, to study. — DANIEL WITTENBACH.

Education keeps the key of life; and a liberal education insures the first conditions of freedom, — namely, adequate knowledge and accustomed thought. — JULIA WARD HOWE.

A wise man knows an ignorant one, because he has been ignorant himself; but the ignorant cannot recognize the wise, because he has never been wise. — *From the Persian.*

I shall detain you no longer in the demonstration of what we should not do, but strait conduct ye to a hillside, where I will point ye out the right path of a virtuous and noble education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but also so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect, and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming. — MILTON.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding. — *Proverbs of Solomon.*

WHAT is education? How shall education be achieved? These two questions lie at the threshold of every serious and

aspiring life. Upon the answer to these questions which each one gives, not in theory only, but in practice, depends the degree of his power, the quality of his character, and the measure of his real success in life.

1. What is education? It is not merely the acquirement and possession of knowledge. Many people think that a man who has read many books is therefore educated, and that he who has read few is therefore uneducated. If one has been through a course of study in college; if he knows somewhat of Latin and Greek, or French and German; if he can quote from Aristotle and Plato, or Bacon and Kant, — he is considered to be educated; meanwhile the truth is that one can do all this and yet not be educated in any just and large sense of the word. Learning and education are not synonymous; the one does not necessarily involve the other except to a limited degree. Learning—that is, the possession of the material of knowledge— is not only important but of extreme value, yet one may lack what is technically known as learning, and be truly educated; while, on the other hand, a man may be loaded with learning, and seriously deficient in real education. The sneer sometimes heard about “learned fools” is not wholly without point and reason. There are men

possessed of encyclopædic learning who are almost devoid of those essential elements or products of true education, wisdom and common-sense.

No great structural idea has grown more, or by its growth has more significantly marked the progress of the human species, than the idea of education; yet it must be confessed that in minds of the first order the growth has been mainly along the line of method. The true aim of education was grasped early, and expressed in terms which it is difficult to improve upon even now.

The ancient Persians trained their youth in regard for the truth, veneration for parents, respect for the laws, and skill in the use of weapons. Their system of education is thus laconically described by Herodotus: "From the age of five to that of twenty they teach their children three things alone, — to manage a horse, to use the bow with dexterity, and to speak the truth." The Greeks, who were the first to develop a science of education, divided their subjects of study into music and gymnastics; the first included all mental, the second all physical, training. Great attention was given to physical culture. Yet Plato said, "There is nothing of a more divine nature

about which a man can consult than about the training of himself, and those who belong to him;" and to him education was of so divine a nature because its end was virtue and the highest good of the state. In his scheme of political and social organization he made education compulsory, thus anticipating our compulsory-education laws by more than two thousand years. Æschines, a little later than Plato, gave the significant testimony: "You are well aware that it is not only by bodily exercises, by educational institutions, or by lessons in music, that our youth are trained, but much more effectually by public examples."

The Romans also paid special attention to gymnastics, and their scheme of study was oratory and gymnastics, — oratory covering a ground nearly co-extensive with music in the Greek scheme. In all of these cases — the Persian, Greek, and Roman — education was largely practical, having its end in action; yet among representative Romans as well as Greeks there was a deeper idea of education than appears on the surface of their formal schemes. For example, Horace said: "The germs of sinful desire are to be rooted out; and minds weakened by indulgence must be trained by sterner discipline;" and again: "It is training

that improves the powers planted in us by Nature, and sound culture that is the armor of the breast; when moral training fails, the noblest endowments of Nature are blemished and lost." Indeed, the best modern conceptions of education have been anticipated by the best minds of antiquity. But the growth in method has been enormous, especially in recent times; and with this growth in method there has been also advance in elevation and breadth of idea. In all historic times some men have perceived that true education terminates not on skill, but on character. Montaigne, criticising the system of education in his day, the middle third of the sixteenth century, says: "It has for its end, to make us not good and wise, but learned; in this it has succeeded. It has not taught us to follow and to embrace virtue, but it has impressed upon us the derivation and etymology of words: we know how to decline virtue, if we do not know how to love it; if we do not know what prudence is by performance and experience, we know it by cant and by rote."

The modern idea of education is much broader than the ancient, and is at once more philosophical and more scientific. The founders of the Prussian National system define educa-

tion as "the harmonious and equable evolution of the human powers." This definition emphasizes the idea that education is a process not of acquisition but of development; that it is not adding something to faculty, but rather is enlarging faculty by the assimilation of knowledge, by exercise, and by growth.

James Mill, expressing the utilitarian view, said that the end of education is "to render the individual, as much as possible, an instrument of happiness; first, to himself, and next, to other beings." This is scarcely so much a definition of education, as a statement of the result at which it is to aim; but a definition is implied. John Stuart Mill, son of James Mill, defined education as "The culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at least keeping up, and if possible for raising, the improvement which has been attained." This definition apparently involves the element of heredity as well as direct training. Still better than either of the preceding is this by Daniel Webster, in his address to the ladies of Richmond: "The attainment of knowledge does not comprise all which is contained in the larger term of education. The feelings are to be disciplined; the passions are to be re-

strained; true and worthy motives are to be inspired; a profound, religious feeling is to be instilled, and pure morality inculcated under all circumstances. All this is comprised in education."

In accordance with the root idea of the word, which means *to lead out*, Worcester defines education as "the act of developing and cultivating the various physical, intellectual, and moral faculties." More explicitly Professor Whitney defines: "Education, in a broad sense, comprehends all that disciplines and enlightens the understanding, corrects the temper, cultivates the taste, and forms the manners and habits;" and he gives as an example this pregnant passage from James Freeman Clarke: "Education, in the true sense, is not mere instruction in Latin, English, French, or history. It is the unfolding of the whole human nature. It is growing up in all things to our highest possibility."

I have quoted these numerous definitions in order to illustrate the development of the idea of education and its growth toward comprehension of the entire scope of human nature.

It is common to treat of education in a three-fold aspect, corresponding to the three-

fold division of man into body, mind, and spirit; to educate is to bring to the highest possible perfection the physical organism, the mental faculties, and the moral nature. This perfection is to be approached through a harmonious and continuous development. But a harmonious culture of man does not imply an equal emphasis on all three lines of development; the order of importance is the reverse of the order of statement, — the moral takes precedence of the intellectual, and the intellectual takes precedence of the physical. This precedence is not temporal but essential. It is neither right nor wise, in any scheme of education, to neglect the body; but the body may easily demand too much attention. We need good, sound bodies, for physical health and vigor are intimately and influentially related to mental and even moral health and vigor; but we do not need to be athletes in order to be well developed. The great workers in the world, the men and women whose thought rules an age or shapes a civilization, are not gymnasts: neither Plato nor Shakespeare had extraordinary muscles; Bacon, I suppose, might easily have been tossed over the shoulders of a coal-heaver; John Wesley scarcely would have served as a model for a sculptor of

the Greek school. History testifies that progress has been achieved, manners have been reformed, virtue has been diffused, and civilization has been raised to higher levels, by the brains and hearts of men, by mental and moral force; and the brute force of muscle has always served, or, if it has ruled, it has wrought devastation and retarded progress.

We cannot rationally put the cultivation of the physical organism on a level with the cultivation of mind and taste and moral sense. Body is the pedestal and instrument, not the equal and companion, much less the master of the soul.

With reference to the body, then, a true education involves such care and culture of the physical system as shall make it most completely fit to serve the spirit. Any special cultivation of the muscles rapidly encroaches on the proper development and use of the mind. It is very rare that a man can be a great athlete and at the same time a profound scholar; as the rule, the man who swings a pair of forty-pound dumb-bells will make no large contribution to the intellectual and moral wealth of society. The truth is that every one has a certain amount of vital force which may be increased, but only within certain limits;

if that vital force is expended chiefly in physical exercise, it cannot, of course, be devoted to mental culture and work. Too much exercise interferes with the aims of the thinker as certainly as too little.

Here, for the present, we may leave the whole subject of physical culture with the single reflection that the body demands such and so much attention as shall make it the fittest instrument of mind and soul. We neglect the body at our peril; we make too much of it at our peril. Saint Paul had the right point of view when he said: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

Education, then, conceived in its relation to our mental and moral nature, is the process of unfolding and strengthening the rational faculties, the sensibilities, and the will, in conformity with the law of righteousness, and by means of instruction, use, and discipline.

It is not necessary, at this time, to enter into any detailed analysis of our mental and moral natures; but it is important clearly to understand that education is the progressive attainment of strong, well-furnished, symmetrical, and efficient manhood and womanhood. In the noble words of John Milton, it is to be "inflamed with the study of learning and the

admiration of virtue; stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men and worthy patriots, dear to God." The rightly educated man is one whose reason is clear, vigorous, and comprehensive, whose judgment is just, whose conscience is quick, whose feeling is generous and pure, and whose will is disciplined and inflexible in right purpose. If one has not these qualities he is not, in the best sense, educated, no matter how extensive may be his learning.

(1) In the first place, education is the awakening and development of the intellectual powers, — the training and disciplining the reason, sharpening the power of observation, strengthening the judgment, and storing the memory with facts and principles. To live wisely and efficiently we need to be able to think accurately and independently. Every one should learn to form his own judgments, else he is the victim of circumstances and the puppet of other minds. Learning to think is learning to stand on one's own feet. Education is a process of coming into rational self-possession.

(2) But reason is not properly separable from conscience, or the moral sense. For convenience, we are accustomed to discriminate

between the rational and the moral in the actions of the mind; still further, we discriminate between the moral and the religious. As a matter of fact, we find many examples of men who are intellectually but not morally developed. Reason and conscience seemingly are divorced. Likewise we find examples of those who have moral insight and conviction without religious cultivation. But in the true conception of man his nature is an integer; he is a rational, but he is also a moral and a religious, being. These three capacities of his nature are radical, and no culture that develops one and not the others is a complete culture. The aptitudes and capacities that relate man to his fellow-man are no more original and persistent than those which relate him to God. Reason suffers serious loss when it is separated from the sense of moral law and the sense of Deity. All ethical and spiritual exercises are in some sense also exercises of the reason. Faith is essentially rational. The mind works as completely and as normally in worship and prayer as in solving a problem in geometry; the process may be different in each case, but in both it is natural and entirely consistent with the laws of man's spiritual being. You may have, indeed, an educated reason without

a clear and regulative moral perception; but *you* are not educated, — the education is partial and defective. The development of the moral faculties is as truly an element of sound education as the development of the mind in logical skill. He who has a dull conscience, or a heart that is insensible to spiritual motives, is not, in the best sense, educated. The relation of those truths and objects which are distinctly and genuinely religious, to the awakening and unfolding of mental power, is so marked and so vital that Christianity, and the divine revelation which is the ground and reason of Christianity, have stimulated the intellectual life and enlarged the intellectual horizon of man more than anything else. The great ideas of God, Incarnation, Righteousness, Love, Salvation, and Immortality have roused and elevated the reason as no ideas and facts of science or art, separated from religion, ever could.

Our education must take its measure from the whole breadth of our nature as moral beings, or it will be partial and inadequate.

We are so used to thinking of education as a science, that we have scarcely thought of religious instruction and experience as a necessary part of complete education; but such they certainly are. Perhaps you have been thinking that

religion is something aside from the ordinary course and occupation of the mind. But the truth is that human nature being what it is, the only natural and complete unfolding of it into strength and beauty is through that culture which, while it develops the reason, develops also the spiritual sense, and awakens the capacity for apprehending God.

(3) The sensibility also is to be cultivated and trained. We are quite as much creatures of feeling as we are creatures of thought. The emotions and passions of the heart are capable of a development that enlarges and enriches the soul. The susceptibility to grief, joy, pleasure, pain, fear, and hope; the sense of the beautiful and the sublime; the power of sympathy, pity, love, and adoration, — all that properly is characterized as feeling, is an important part of our nature. Education, in the complete sense, involves a schooling of the heart in every pure and generous emotion, and in large appreciation of all that is good. The man with a narrow sympathy, or little capacity for loving, is so far an uneducated man, however brilliant or solid may be his intellectual attainments.

(4) A very important part of education is the development and discipline of the will;

without this, the largest attainments of knowledge lose much of their value. The young man who comes from college generously furnished with knowledge of languages, sciences, and history, is ordinarily considered well-educated; but if he is vacillating in purpose, irresolute, and wanting in sustained and concentrated energy, he is but half educated. He is like a shapely and richly-freighted vessel without keel and rudder, and with no fire in the furnaces. The will is the true propulsive power in a man, and if that is weak or ill-regulated he must be ineffective. No education is adequate to the needs of life which does not produce decision of character, courage, self-control, and perseverance. There is no faculty of the soul—no power of reason, no susceptibility of heart, no capacity for virtue, no germ of energy—that may not be evolved into strength and trained into an efficient element of character. The will is the chief executive in the Republic of our faculties; if it is fit and able to command, because it has been tempered and disciplined in righteousness, it unifies the whole nature, making it harmonious and strong and efficacious. Why is it that so many know far better than they do? Mainly it is because they have not a will educated to an equal pitch with reason and con-

science. Will has been called "the spinal column of personality;" it is the chief stay of character. An undisciplined will leaves the mind subject to the vagaries of fancy, and thinking degenerates into dreaming or desultory and profitless speculation; it leaves the heart a prey to stormy passions, or capricious emotions, and conduct becomes the expression of irrational and changeful impulse.

It is at just this point that many parents make their first and worst mistake in training their children. They seem not to understand that they are responsible for the education of their children's wills, and that all the culture which they so assiduously bestow on their children will not save those children's lives from inefficiency, and perhaps fatal disaster, if their wills are not developed and trained in righteousness. We who are seeking education for ourselves should learn speedily that the condition and quality of our wills is the pivotal point in true self-culture. The Biblical idea of the worth and use of the will is a revelation on this matter of education. That idea often has been misrepresented. Religious teachers have affirmed that in our relation to God the will should be suppressed or annihilated. Tennyson sang, with greater truth than Calvin or Edwards argued: —

“Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.”

Subjection of the will to God is not an abdication or loss of will, any more than subjection of the reason to God is abdication or loss of reason. It is only self-will, which is the wilfulness of selfishness, that must be abandoned. There is no way of subjecting our wills to God save the way of that use and discipline by which will becomes the free, persistent executor of righteousness. To will the wise and good is to have both a free and a strong will. The grand distinction of the mature Christian — that is, the man who is morally and spiritually mature — is that his will is liberated and strengthened and trained to spontaneous holy choices through its rational subjection to God.

You see, then, how large is the true idea of education. Get rid of the notion, if you have it, that education is identical with knowledge of books. Books — good books — are of immense value; they are important means of education. But education is the unfolding of our entire nature — of mind, heart, conscience, and will — into strength, efficiency, and beauty. It is not what you have that determines whether or not you are educated, but what you are. If your reason acts with clearness, force, and independence, and

in entire devotion to truth; if your sensibility is healthily and discriminatingly susceptible to every exhibition of the beautiful, the sublime, and the good, and your heart is the home of pure love and every generous emotion; if your conscience responds to the attraction of moral law as the planets respond to the force of gravitation, and your whole soul welcomes God as the flowers welcome the sun; and if your will steadily rules and regulates all your faculties in the practice of righteousness, — then you are educated as God means His children to be educated. That is the ideal of culture; in the light of it every man's realized education is seen to be but relative. There is no completeness here, — only promise and progress. We hear sometimes of those whose education is finished. Alas, for the young man or woman who conceives that education is or can be finished in the few years of school-life! You will occasionally see advertisements of institutions that call themselves "finishing-schools;" there is an unsuspected irony in the name. I know of no finishing-school but the school of God's wise, patient providence; and the course in that school stretches on into the vista that opens beyond the grave. "I carry my satchel still," said the aged Michael Angelo.

Therefore, of necessity, education is progressive; it is not a getting, but a growing. Plato said: "The true education is that which draws men from becoming to being." Life here is the school for life hereafter. Our education is to be achieved, not by neglecting or despising the culture which is necessary for efficiency in time, because we are swiftly moving toward eternity; but by wisely appreciating the opportunities and duties of the present, and thus making our education here a true basis and beginning of the life everlasting.

But some of you may feel that I have made the definition of education so broad that it becomes vague and unpractical. Is it not true, however, that we need to broaden rather than to limit our ideas, and to view present duties and possibilities in the light of their eternal significance? To-day is the seed-time of all the future. Whatever acquirements help us to do to-day's tasks better will help us to achieve to-morrow's work better, and next year's tasks, and the tasks of all time. The fine residuum of to-day's study appears in to-morrow's increase of power. Real acquirement, even the honest effort to acquire, improves our quality, makes our minds broader, our hearts

more capacious, and our wills at once more resolute and free.

To the progressive realization of the ideal education every endeavor toward self-improvement contributes; and having the ideal before us helps us to a wiser, as well as inspires us to a more persistent, endeavor.

It is scarcely necessary now to speak at length on the value of education; that must be apparent to every earnest mind. Some one has made the following curious computation: "A bar of iron worth \$5, worked into horse-shoes is worth \$10.50; made into needles, it is worth \$355; made into pen-knife blades, it is worth \$3,285; made into balance-springs of watches, it is worth \$250,000." This marvellous progression in value is a vivid illustration of that advance which man makes in the process of education. He passes from the crude iron of the bar into the tempered steel of the spring; he becomes continually more of a man, higher in his intrinsic worth, in proportion as he develops toward maturity of mind and soul. The savage seems little above the brute; the saint stands near to God's throne.

2. I have space to say but a few words on the question: How shall education be achieved? How shall we, in our various circumstances, with

our different endowments and different opportunities, begin and push on this process of development? Do not forget that this process is not merely intellectual; furnishing and training the mind alone is not sufficient. The entire nature must be included. It is an important truth that, while all cannot, perhaps, be learned, all may be in some true sense educated. Every one has a chance in life's great university. Some of you may be hindered from ever seeing the inside of a college; but you need not, and if you are courageous you will not, be hindered from attaining that culture the loss of which no college course, no parchment degree, can retrieve. For, after all, a college is but a means; it is the best means, both as to economy and efficiency, but not the only means to the desired end. Go to college if you can. But if you cannot go to college, then seize and utilize every opportunity that life affords you for mental and moral self-culture. The ordinary means of education are books and Nature and experience, which furnish the material of knowledge, and that exercise of faculties through which discipline is attained. These two, knowledge and discipline, or truth and power, are the possession of every educated mind. The first principle to learn and apply

is this: effort is the inexorable condition of growth. How does a man learn to think? By thinking; as a child learns to walk by walking. "How do you teach your pupils to paint?" asked some one of the artist Opie. "As you teach puppies to swim," was the reply; "by chucking them in." There is no other way. Use your reason and you will come into possession of it, and it will take on facility and power. Use your minds on the material furnished by observation, by reading, and by hearing; form the habit of analyzing, judging, and generalizing; exert your faculties continually in perceiving causes and relations, and forming conclusions, and test your conclusions continually by facts and principles,—and you will grow in mental strength as surely as your muscles will grow by exercise in a gymnasium. Cultivate the habit of serious and, as far as possible, systematic reading. Read good books, books that contain facts and truths and inspirations. It is not necessary to read many books, but they should be good books. The greatest books are the best for self-culture. Two minutes would suffice for naming a library sufficient for "a lonely and athletic student,"—The Bible, Plato, Shakespeare, Bacon, Goethe, Browning. But while you use your minds in the acquirement of

knowledge, and the cultivation of reason and taste, exercise the heart in pure and elevated emotions, and discipline the will in right choices. You are bundles of powers; these are as yet, perhaps, only embryonic. God has given you life, faculty, occupation, the sense of duty, the capacity of love, and the revelation of His grace. Live alertly and earnestly. Keep constantly before your minds that you are not here merely to eat and drudge and amuse yourselves and sleep. Let each day record in your experience some thought worth thinking, some choice worth making, some deed worth doing. Resolutely persevere in this course, and little by little your whole nature will expand and develop and rise continually into higher quality and power. What you are to aim at is not to seem, but to be, and to be the best possible. There is no pretence more pitiable than the pretence of culture which one has not, except it be the pretence of piety which one has not. You will need often to fortify yourselves with the reflection that education is costly, — not so much of money, as of labor and self-denial and patience. But it is worth all the cost. Life is glorious, however toilsome and even painful it may be, if it be a progress in knowledge and power and righteousness.

The religious aspect of education appears in the relation of faith to a sufficient motive to seek the highest culture. Belief in God and immortality gives lofty and enduring motive; self-improvement becomes a sacred duty in the light of our divine relations and destiny. That is not a true interpretation of Christianity which makes it obstructive of the largest self-culture. Jesus Christ is the powerful ally of every youth who aspires to rise toward the full measure of his intellectual possibility. The love of God, instead of being a deterrent, is a stimulant to culture. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *mind*" is not less obligatory than "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul." An intelligent and loyal devotion to Christ is a constant source of impulse toward the only complete education, that education the result of which appears in a fully developed, spiritual manhood and womanhood. Under the strong and gentle Mastership of Christ you will find yourselves drawn into a fruitful cultivation and a tonic discipline of all your powers. His thoughts will enrich and broaden your minds; his love will enlarge and purify your hearts, making them the homes of all generous sympathies, all noble affections, and all sweet charities; and his authority will

train your wills in virtuous choices that will surely develop into righteous habits, and ripen at last into permanent characters in every lineament of which will shine "the beauty of holiness."

SAVING TIME.

TIME is the chrysalis of eternity. — RICHTER.

Act well at the moment, and you have performed a good act to all eternity. — LAVATER.

Short as life is we make it still shorter by the careless waste of time. — VICTOR HUGO.

I wasted time, and now time doth waste me. — SHAKESPEARE.

Lost, yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever. — HORACE MANN.

If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be the greatest prodigality, since lost time is never found again; and what we call time enough always proves little enough. — FRANKLIN.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. — SAINT PAUL.

IT was an old custom to place in the hand of a corpse an hour-glass in which all the sands had run down. It were wiser to put an hour-glass in the hand of the living that there might be before the mind, in the sinking sand, a vivid symbol of time's unceasing lapse. Many are saving of money, saving of labor, saving of

health, and prodigal of time. The little appreciation of time of which a large part of society is guilty has coined itself into the phrase "killing time." What a murder is that! It is strange that, when every moment of time gives space for some high thought, some noble deed, some gain in knowledge and goodness, time should be so lightly esteemed and even scorned. They who set no value on time, who talk of killing time because, forsooth, their own abuse of it brings to them weariness and disgust, are like the drowsing princess who saw not that her necklace of pearls lay broken on the boat's verge, and at every oscillation of the idly rocking boat a precious pearl slipped from the severed string into the deep.

Why should we save time? Because time is opportunity for life, and time lost cannot be recovered, it is lost forever. Each moment comes to us rich in possibilities, bringing to us duty, privilege, the space and the call for achievement, and, even as we contemplate it, becomes

"Portion and parcel of the dreadful past."

All life is condensed into the moment that we call "now," and the wasting of a moment is, for that moment, the wasting of a life.

“Dost thou love life?” said Poor Richard, “then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.” “Look here,” said De Quincy. “Put into a Roman clepsydra one hundred drops of water; let these run out as the sands in an hour-glass, — every drop measuring the hundredth part of a second, so that each shall represent but the three-hundred-and-sixty-thousandth part of an hour. Now count the drops as they race along; and, when the fiftieth of the hundred is passing, behold! forty-nine are not, because already they have perished; and fifty are not, because they are yet to come. You see, therefore, how narrow, how incalculably narrow, is the true and actual present. Of that time which we call the present, hardly a hundredth part but belongs either to a past which has fled, or to a future which is still on the wing.” An officer apologized to General O. M. Mitchell, the astronomer, for a brief delay, saying he was only a few moments late. “Only a few moments late!” exclaimed the general; “I have been in the habit of calculating the value of the thousandth part of a second.” An apparently trifling waste of time has lost a great battle, and changed the political destiny of a continent. An hour or two saved by Napoleon might have made Waterloo as proud a remembrance for France as it is now for England.

A few years ago an important astronomical event occurred, — the transit of Venus. All over the world governments as well as individual men were deeply interested in the coming of that event the successful observation of which would reward the endeavors and verify the patient calculations of many years, and give greater accuracy to astronomical work through all the future. The loss of five minutes, three minutes, one minute, would have hopelessly defeated the purpose for the accomplishment of which so much money had been spent and so great labors had been borne.

Ask Professor Newcomb in his observatory at Washington the value of time from a merely scientific point of view, and he will tell you that we have no standard by which adequately to measure its value. But the scientific point of view is not the highest point of view, nor is the scientific value of time its highest value. The chief interests of life are moral and spiritual; all else is scaffolding and instrument, all else takes its significance from these. Not knowledge and achievement, but character and destiny, are the fundamental concerns; in relation to these time has a transcendent value. Often a just appreciation of the true use and real value of time comes only when the end alike of toil and

of pleasure is drawing near. The solemnity of death lies quite as much in the retrospect to which its approach awakens the mind, as in the doubtful prospect. Like the sibylline books, the days enhance prodigiously in value as they diminish in number. And yet there is time enough for life's great ends. "We all complain," said Seneca, "of the shortness of time; and yet we have more than we know what to do with. Our lives are spent either in doing nothing at all, or in doing nothing to the purpose, or in doing nothing that we ought to do. We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end of them."

Among all our economies there is none, perhaps, more important, and none less understood and less wisely practised than a true economy of time. What is it to save time? It cannot, like money, be hoarded; it can be saved only by the manner in which it is spent, for spend it we must. Time spent in recreation, or in seeming idleness, is not necessarily wasted; proper recreation and rest of body and mind are necessary elements of a true economy of time. "Take rest," said Ovid; "a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop of corn."

On the other hand, time spent in work is not

always saved; work is waste if it be done at the expense of needed recreation. Often time is wasted because it is devoted to work that were better left undone. Trivial and needless tasks, tasks that are invented merely to give essential indolence the appearance of industry, belong to the spendthrift of time. How much work is but time "elaborately thrown away!" All evil-doing is waste of time; every hour lived selfishly is thrown away. Wickedness is the worst form of prodigality. Much of work done for merely temporal and material ends, though the ends themselves, in proper subordination to the main ends of life, are legitimate, is waste of time. The miser's life is as really misspent as the prodigal's. Many a man who has toiled through years, avaricious of time, losing no moment that he could snatch from sleep in order to turn it into gold, has laid himself down at last in a cheerless grave, and left behind him three-score wasted years, — a loss far outbalancing all his gains.

Saving time is using time in accordance with those physical and moral and spiritual laws under which man is to attain his ends and fulfil his destiny as a child of God. With this fundamental principle of economy in mind, let us consider the question: How may we save time?

I. *We may save time by putting it to its best use.* The best use of time is determined by the true aim of life. If acquisition of wealth is the supreme aim, then the best use of time is its persistent expenditure in planning and striving to win and accumulate money. But money is only temporal in value, and even in time its worth and use are limited. Besides we are not meant to live here always; this world is but a scene of preparation for another. Money, like every other material thing, derives its chief value, we may even say its entire value, from its possible use in the service of the spirit. The earth is the sphere, but in no sense the goal, of man's best aspiration and endeavor. It is a pedestal for us to stand on as we look up, but not a god for us to worship; it is opportunity and instrument, not an end. Sad indeed is the lot of him who, making the world his chief good, gains the world and loses himself — the true, spiritual self, in which life attains a divine fulfilment. I remember some lines that were in the school reading-books of thirty years ago: —

“The world for sale! hang out the sign;
Call every traveller here to me:
Who'll buy this brave estate of mine,
And set this weary spirit free?
'T is going! yes, I mean to fling
The bauble from my soul away;
I'll sell it, whatsoe'er it bring;
The world's at auction here to-day!

“ It is a glorious sight to see, —
But, ah! it has deceived me sore ;
It is not what it seems to be.
For sale! it shall be mine no more.
Come, turn it o'er, and view it well ;
I would not have you purchase dear.
'T is going! going! I must sell!
Who bids? Who 'll buy the splendid Tear? ”

God is our true end, and His service is our true occupation. The best use that we can make of time is to spend it in fulfilling the divine will. Time then becomes not so much the prelude as the beginning of eternity. The old divines used to preach much on the necessity of preparation for death, but the preparation we most need is for life; right living to-day is the only rational preparation for death, or whatever may come after death. Whatever use of time hinders the development of our spirits in wisdom, purity, and unselfishness, is an abuse and waste of time; whatever use of time brings to us knowledge and skill in doing good, broadens our minds and enlarges our hearts, brings righteous purpose to birth, and enriches human life with beneficent activity is a true economy of time. Every effort of thought that elevates the soul; every deed or word that makes life milder, and sorrow less bitter, and evil less prevalent, and so helps on the coming of

God's kingdom in the earth, — saves time. The rest which restores our exhausted strength; the amusement which freshens our jaded faculties; the meditation which fructifies the soul with pure and lofty ideas; the self-examination which produces true self-knowledge and the impulse continually to improve our characters; the endurance that makes heroism a habit; and the endeavor that increases day by day the sum-total of human good, — all this is time put to its highest use.

If our purpose in life be right, there will be no want of opportunity to use well all the time that God gives us. The ordinary relations and experiences of our lives afford abundant scope for our best powers, and the progress of civilization continually opens up new channels for the exercise of developing capability. To the earnest soul life is rich beyond price. When we think of all that we may do and become for humanity and God, how valuable time is and how short it seems! But the terms "long" and "short" have little meaning when applied to the life of the soul.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs.
He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts
the best."

That was a wise saying by quaint old Thomas Fuller: "He lives long that lives well; and time misspent is not lived, but lost."

2. *We may save time by controlling it.* This, often, is difficult to do. In the bread-winning work of life many must put the larger part of their time at the disposal of others; but the control of time should not be so completely relinquished as to allow it to be expended in unworthy ways and for evil ends. If you sell your time to an employer for a certain wage, you ought not to sell it so entirely that he may make it wasted time. I know that there are survivals still of that tyranny which seeks to turn men into mere machines for producing wealth, and which attempts, often successfully, to compel a service that violates the laws of God if not the laws of human society. Many a time I have listened with sad and protesting heart to men who told me of being forced by the greed of employers, combined with the exigency of their own need, to do things from which their consciences as well as their tastes recoiled, and to work during hours that by divine revelation and the spiritual instincts of men have been consecrated to rest and worship.

There is a problem here, in our industrial and moral life, which is hard to solve: how to rescue

the poor from the unnecessary and sometimes iniquitous exactions of powerful corporations. It may be true that "corporations have no souls," as the world consents with biting sarcasm to say; but we may be sure that corporations have a judgment-day, sooner or later, in time, and by-and-by a better instructed public conscience, as well as divine Providence, will pronounce a just retribution on those who have made unrighteous gain out of the necessities of their fellow-men.

Emancipation must come partly from the workers themselves. It is every one's duty so to control his time that it shall not be prostituted to the service of Mammon or the Devil. It is better to starve than to be a slave; it is better to disregard the deceptive promises of advancement which are sometimes held out as an appeal to selfish ambition and a bribe to conscience, than to make any material gain at the expense of manhood.

But aside from the demands of the main occupation which supplies material needs, there is much time, though it be only in fragments, that may be saved for the best uses. The Scotch have a homely proverb: "Mony littles mak' a mickle." An education that would adorn a man of letters, or qualify a college pro-

fessor, has been secured in the fragments of leisure that are often wasted because they are so little. Professor William Matthews, in his admirable book, "Getting on in the World," gives an instructive list of great men who did much of the work for which they are remembered by economizing odd moments. "Franklin," he says, "stole his hours of study from meals and sleep, and, for years, with inflexible resolution, strove to save for his own instruction every minute that could be won. Henry Kirke White learned Greek while walking to and from a lawyer's office. Hugh Miller found time while pursuing his trade as a stone-mason, not only to read, but to write, cultivating his style till he became one of the most facile and brilliant authors of the day. Elihu Burritt acquired a mastery of eighteen languages and twenty-two dialects, not by rare genius, which he disclaimed, but by improving the bits and fragments of time which he could steal from his occupation as a blacksmith. Mr. Grote the historian of Greece, whose work is by far the fullest and most trustworthy on the subject, and who also snatched time from business to write two large volumes upon Plato, was a banker." But I have quoted quite enough to illustrate what I mean about economizing the odds and ends of

our time. There is scarcely any one who cannot get a few minutes each day for solid self-improvement. Thirty minutes a day diligently spent in reading will enable one in a year to go through profitably twenty good books of average size. That is more, I presume, than most of you have read of serious literature during the past year. As a little time can be secured each day for instructive reading, so also a little time can be found for religious self-culture, for conning a few stimulating sentences in the Bible, and for meditation and prayer. It is only by a watchful husbanding of the minutes that many of you will secure the growth in knowledge and spiritual insight on which, so much more than on anything else, depends the real usefulness and happiness of life.

Again, every one can save time for helping others,—for doing those deeds of neighborly kindness, and speaking those words of sympathy and encouragement which are so powerful for good on the lives of people around us. “Life is not so short,” said Emerson, “but that there is always time enough for courtesy.” Time spent in unselfish ministry to the real needs of others is never time lost, but time saved. Such expenditure never impoverishes but enriches the spender.

“ Suppose a neighbor should desire
To light a candle at your fire,
Would it deprive your flame of light,
Because another profits by 't?”

Minutes are like gold-dust, which is never so fine that it cannot be used, or that it loses any of its value; a crown fit for a king can be made out of the sweepings of the goldsmith's shop, as well as out of the massy bar. In Philadelphia, the floors of the United States mint are covered with a light grating, and, at stated intervals, this grating is taken up and the floors are carefully swept in order to recover the precious particles of gold that unseen have fallen upon them. I was told by an employé of the mint that some years ago a fellow-workman was detected in wearing some adhesive substance on the soles of his shoes, and it was discovered that he had thus picked up and carried away an almost incredible amount of gold. What a gain we should make, clear and honest gain, if we had the wit to furnish our minds with some adhesive quality that would seize the bright, golden fragments of time which now every day we thoughtlessly waste. Save time by controlling it,—by directing the mind to a wise and scrupulous economy of the leisure minutes that interspace every day's toil.

3. *We may save time by taking time to prepare for our life's work.* We live in a time when every one seems to be in a hurry. The leisurely life of a century, or even half a century, ago has almost vanished from this Western Hemisphere. The art of resting is well-nigh a lost art. Men are in haste to get rich, in haste to get learning, in haste to get pleasure, in haste to do everything but to hasten slowly, and ripen in heart and soul. We have almost a minimum of holidays; and those that we have we spend in laborious pleasure-seeking. We are losing our Sabbath, for in many parts of the land the smoke of our factories and mills weaves its dark web over our homes from Monday morning to Monday morning, and our steam-cars rush with smoking axles through all the seven days and nights of the week. One result of this haste is that men are wearing out, and a vast amount of work is done that resembles many of our modern buildings, — it is too quickly done to be permanent. Builders and buildings alike endure but half their time. This is the sure-footed Nemesis that follows hard upon our sin of excessive haste. In the hush about death-beds, on which manhood's strength and woman's grace lie prematurely sacrificed by the insatiate spirit of feverish toil, we may hear the poet-voice, rising into a prophet-voice, saying: —

“O earth, so full of dreary noises !
O men, with wailing in your voices !
O delvèd gold, the wailers heap !
O strife, O curse, that o’er it fall !
God strikes a silence through you all,
And giveth His beloved sleep.”

Slowly we learn the lesson that haste makes waste, of life as well as of materials. Men may build a pasteboard house in a day; but they cannot rear the solid structure that bids defiance to time, or shape the strong character that resists the pressure of trial, save as they are willing to use time in some such way as God uses it in evolving from an acorn the gigantic and invincible oak.

It is poor economy to give scant time to laying foundations. Many a young man irremediably mars his life by haste in assuming his life’s work. One wishes to be a lawyer, and is eager to begin his chosen career. He will not go to college, for that takes time; hence he enters upon a noble and arduous calling with faculties undisciplined by vigorous preparatory training, and, in time, develops into a small pettifogger, or rises into power and eminence after years of toil with the consciousness that he has been hampered through all his course by want of broad and solid preparation. Another wishes to be a physician, another a

merchant, another a journalist; too young to choose wisely, and with fathers too busy to choose wisely for them, these callow youths waste not only time, but much besides, because of their haste to begin work for which they are not fit. Green lumber shrinks, and, put into the house before it is seasoned, leaves gaping cracks to mar the beauty and lessen the strength of the building. Untempered mortar in the hastily built wall necessitates unceasing and expensive repairs, or insures speedy decay and ruin.

Learn this lesson well, that time spent in seasoning and fitting yourselves for the serious business of life is not time wasted, but time saved.

If you are called to the ministry of religion heed the call; but remember that the call is first to careful and ample preparation. If you are called to teach, take time to make yourself capable to teach out of the fulness of your own knowledge and the force of your own disciplined strength. When God wants a man or a woman for some great work in the world He does not commission a crude, untempered soul. Moses was schooled for forty years in Egypt, and disciplined for forty years more in the desert, before he was fit to lead Israel out

of bondage and create a new nation for conquest. It is even pertinent to recall that our blessed Lord was full thirty years old before he began his public ministry. The principle that good work demands thoroughness of preparation, and that adequate preparation is a true saving of time, is applicable to every important vocation.

4. *We may save time by having a definite aim, and by concentrating our energies in the line of that aim.*

The first condition of right and efficient life is to know exactly the end for which you are living, and to maintain inflexibly the purpose of living for that end. Many men do not find their proper work till middle life, or even later; or having found it, they lack the necessary tenacity of purpose to do that work; meanwhile they waste much time and strength in vainly attempting to do work for which they are not fit, and at last sink into a state of chronic discontent and hopeless inefficiency.

Save time by early defining your specific work and by concentrating your energies on that work.

5. Finally. *We may save time by doing to-day the duty that belongs to to-day.* Each day brings its peculiar opportunity for doing good.

Procrastination is the thief of power and happiness as well as of time. Here, at your side and mine, are needs that appeal for such ministry as we can give. *Now* is always "the acceptable time." Heal the hurts of to-day, and save to-morrow's pain. Speak the true, kind word to-day, and save to-morrow's regret when ears deaf with death cannot receive the tardy tribute of appreciation and sympathy. Bestow your charities now, when with them will go, to enhance their value, the force of your personal interest and influence; men often plan to make large benefactions when they are dead, and waste the opportunity of making richer gifts while they live. The dead hand may scatter gold, but the living hand scatters with the gold that which is of greater worth. We shall save time by cultivating, not only a higher estimate of present opportunities and duties, but also a warmer and more generous appreciation of present companionship. Too often we prize our fellows only when they are gone. Death lays his finger on the lips of captious criticism, and opens the eyes to previously unseen or only half-seen virtues. How true it is that we really know those about us only after they have left our side and passed beyond the reach of

our praise or blame! Many a true heart is chilled by neglect; many a willing hand is paralyzed by want of quick and sympathetic coöperation. We look into each other's faces and see little of what is going on in the soul. The bravest and best often are least demonstrative and least given to complaining; and eyes that meet our gaze calmly, and with no tell-tale shadow of reproach or appeal, weep inwardly tears of bitter grief and unutterable longing for a little human sympathy to-day. As soldiers die side by side in battle, each unconscious of the other's sharp agony, so often men toil and strive within hand's reach of each other, and know not each other's pain. It is just that we should love and honor the dead, but it is not less just that we should love and honor the living. Is there some inexorable law that we should not be generous, or even fairly just, to our brothers and sisters while they are within the sound of our voices? Is death the only solvent that can effectually reduce the barriers which ignorance and selfishness, or the paltry conventionalities of society, build up between us? How often a fainting heart would have been inspired to fresh courage and hope by words that remained unspoken till the mute appeal from a coffin unlocked reluctant

lips. Oh, my friends, seize this moment to speak the word of comfort, the word of hope, the word of appreciation and praise! Save time by doing now the thing that ought to be done now. If you have wronged any one, right the wrong to-day; if you have sinned, repent to-day; if you are impelled to reach out for divine help, yield to the impulse now; if you are conscious that Christ calls you to a larger service of your fellow-men, hear him now. Do the duty that lies next. Delay is time lost; action is time saved and life saved.

After all, this whole question of how to save time is rightly answered by rightly answering the question, Whose is your time? Who gives it to you? Who has an indefeasible claim to its entire use? The recognition of God's claim is the first condition of the true economy of time.

“Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet.

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”

CHARITY.

DID Universal Charity prevail, Earth would be an heaven,
and hell a fable. — COLTON.

You will find people ready enough to do the Samaritan
without the oil and two-pence. — SIDNEY SMITH.

A Tuscan coast-guard reported to his government that
there had been a lamentable shipwreck on the coast, and he
said, "Notwithstanding that I lent to the crew on board the
ship every assistance possible by means of my speaking-
trumpet, I regret to say that a number of bodies were washed
upon the shore next morning, dead." — *Anonymous.*

The highest exercise of charity is charity towards the
uncharitable. — BUCKMINSTER.

He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which
he must pass himself; for every man has need to be forgiven.
— HERBERT.

When death, the great reconciler, has come, it is never
our tenderness that we repent of, but our severity. —
GEORGE ELIOT.

Judge not ;

What looks to thy dim eye a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar brought from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

ADELAIDE PROCTOR.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a
tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy,
and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though

I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never faileth. . . . And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. — SAINT PAUL.

THE word rendered “charity” in that marvellous prose idyl, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, is the Greek *ἀγάπη*, which means love. The Vulgate, or early Latin Version of the New Testament, rendered *ἀγάπη* by *caritas*. This word, meaning “dearness, expensiveness,” and then “esteem, high regard,” and even “love,” reappears in our English “charity.” *Caritas*, or *Charitas* as it is sometimes spelled, is not a true equivalent of *ἀγάπη*, but the Latin *amor*, “love,” had sensual uses and associations, surviving in our word “amorous,” that utterly unfitted it for expressing the spiritual idea which underlies *ἀγάπη* in New Testament Greek. This is the reason why *caritas* in the Latin Version, and “charity” in the English Version were used to translate a word which means love in its highest and holiest sense. The Revised Version of the English Bible accu-

rately renders the original, thus: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. . . . Love suffereth long and is kind. . . . Love never faileth," etc.

The deep spiritual truth that Jesus taught by word and deed, and that humanity is slowly but surely learning, is this: *Love never faileth*. It has perpetuity because it is imperishable. He who truly loves is akin to God. Saint John said: "Every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." The capacity for holy love is the clearest inward witness of man's immortality; that which is of God cannot die, and the spirit that loves participates in God's eternal being.

But we are to consider now a special aspect and manifestation of love; we are to think of love practically working in our every day relations with our fellow-men, — our opinions of them, our speech to them, and our deeds as affecting their condition and characters. I cannot do better at the outset than to comment freely on the remarkable characterization of love, or charity, which Saint Paul has given us in the seventh verse of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians: "Charity beareth all

things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

1. *Charity beareth all things.* The word "bear," is the Greek verb, *στέγω*, which means "to cover." The noun, *στέγη* means "a roof," "a covering" and often, "a room or tent." We find the verb used in classic Greek in the sense of "to cover or conceal," and to "fend off," and even "to bear up, sustain, support." Taking the word, then, in its fully developed significance, we see that the phrase, "Charity beareth all things" means, "Charity covers, protects, and supports."

Charity is something more than a benevolent disposition to supply the temporal needs of men; though it certainly is that, for it is love expressing itself in helpful action. Christ and the apostles inculcate love of man conjointly with love of God; but in many minds these are equally vague and weak, because they have been separated from each other, and because they have been separated from action; thus, love of man has remained only a sentiment instead of developing into passionate purpose. In our benevolent moods we fancy that we love all men; we are ready to exclaim with Terence: "I am a man, and I count nothing human foreign to me." But when we are compelled by the exigencies of life to particularize, to con-

sider some concrete individual, as John Jones or Richard Smith, we discover that we are very far from realizing our sentiment in a practical way; our sentiment proves to be only sentimentality. It is said that once Eugene Sue was met in the streets of Paris by a woman in tattered clothes, who asked help in her poverty. Sue refused to give anything, and attempted to continue his walk, but the woman stopped him, and with piteous importunity renewed her request; again her prayer was denied, and this time roughly. Still she persisted, and Sue, turning angrily upon her, bade her begone, or he would give her over to the police; then the woman, dropping her suppliant tone, demanded in stern and impressive speech, if this was really Eugene Sue, the celebrated advocate of the poor and oppressed, the man who so eloquently described and sympathetically lamented in his books the hard lot of the outcast and unfortunate. Astonished both at the tone and polished directness of the woman's speech, the great author asked: "Who are you?" She replied, "Madame ——," naming one of the most fashionable ladies in Paris, and one to whom Sue had boasted of his benevolence, and suddenly left him stunned and conscience-smitten on the street.

It is easy to be philanthropic in speech, to weep in books over the sorrows of the world, to be generous and sympathetic on paper; but a real love of humanity, such as Jesus taught and illustrated, involves a practical charity that is ready to express itself in deeds as well as words when confronted by concrete cases of human need. "If a brother or sister be naked, and in lack of daily food, and one of you say to them, Go in peace, be warmed, and be filled, but ye give them not the things needful for the body, what does it profit?" Charity, like faith, if it has not works, is dead.

But the truly charitable man not only supplies the wants of his fellow-men, he also bears with their weaknesses and faults. Love is blind, wisely and tenderly blind; it covers up the sins of others instead of eagerly seeking them out. The good man throws a mantle of charity over many a folly and transgression; he penetrates to the soul beneath the sin, and, in a divine love for that, shields instead of condemns the sinner.

There is a vicious tendency in some natures to seek out and to advertise evil; this is one of the most damning evidences of human degeneracy and depravity, — this appetite for badness. The cynic and the scandal-monger are

open-eyed for the defects and misdeeds of others; they are always on the watch for some flaw in speech or conduct; they prophesy evil of their neighbors, and under an air of simulated deprecation and sadness disclose a revolting exultation over a fall. "I am sorry," they will say, "but I expected it. I knew that woman was no better than she ought to be; I always thought that man was unsound." Many who do not hunt for faults in others are quick in condemnation when faults are exposed, having no defensive, no pitying word to speak for the ill-doer. As famished wolves are said to set upon an injured companion and devour him, so, often, men and women show a wolfish disposition toward those whom temptation has overtaken and thrown.

Over against this unnatural-natural disposition the New Testament sets the charity that bears all things, that is slow to detect a fault, that hastens to shield it from the gaze of harsh criticism, that defends the wrong-doer till mercy shall exhaust itself in seeking his recovery before "justice" lets loose his thunderbolts of penalty. This charity is not indifference to distinctions between right and wrong; indeed there is no guaranty of a sensitive conscience and a clear moral judgment so strong

as a deep and tender heart. God is unerringly just because He is perfectly good. Nor is charity a weak indulgence toward sin. The cynic will tell you that the man who is gentle with the faults of others only seeks to forestall judgment against his own; but the contrary is true. No man is so faithfully severe toward himself as he who is most tender toward the failings of others; the Pharisee "hurls the contumelious stone," and is blind to his own defects.

It is of the nature of true love that it cannot be put out of countenance or thrust aside from its sweet intention by any show or force of opposing evil. Jesus could die on the cross, but he could not be scourged or buffeted or maligned out of his steadfast love for human souls; and those who most closely follow him are most obstinate and invincible in sheer goodness. It was on the cross that Jesus won his chief qualification for his divine function of Judge of the world.

2. *Charity believeth all things.* This does not mean that love is weakly credulous; but rather that it is not shrewdly suspicious. It believes in goodness; and because evil is always more obtrusive than good, as pain is always more obtrusive than pleasure, has confi-

dence in the existence of good even beneath manifest evil. The charitable heart is slow to credit evidence of guilt. While a selfish spirit is quick to detect or to assume badness in conduct and to impute bad motives, the loving spirit is quick to impute right impulses and to discern the obscured good which often underlies seeming perversity of conduct. Love believes in God, and it believes in man, — not blindly and foolishly, but with the sure instinct for goodness, and the radical conviction that righteousness is more vital and powerful than unrighteousness. No one can keep his faith in God who loses a generous faith in humanity; for humanity, despite its imperfections and its grievous falls, came from God, is the expression of the divine love, and the object and sphere of the divine redemptive purpose. When Jesus said to his disciples "Believe in God, and believe in me," it was as if he said: "Believe in divinity, and believe also in the ideal humanity, for these two are one."

It is not then an undiscerning credulousness that is expressed in the words: "Charity believeth all things," but a large faith in that possibility of goodness which is in every human soul. True charity is the spirit in a man which makes him say, when he sees a fellow-man

buffeted by many trials, and struggling in the toils of temptation, or even falling into grievous error and fault: "I believe in that man; I am sure he would rather be right than wrong. I will help him and do him good." Selfishness has coined the hateful maxim: "Count every man a rogue until he is proved honest." That may be "worldly wisdom," but it is of the Devil, the slanderer, as *diabolos* means. Charity says, rather, "Count every man a brother, believe in him, and overcome evil with good."

3. *Charity hopeth all things.* It is not only generously trustful and patient with respect to the present, but it is also cordially hopeful with respect to the future. Love is the true optimist. It steadily believes in the reality of goodness amid all the contradictions of present experience, and it is joyfully and bravely expectant of the clear vindication and triumph of goodness in the time to come. It has hope in God, and therefore it has hope for God's creatures.

"My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."

This hope is not vaguely general, — a nebulous confidence in the progress of the race toward a golden age of righteousness and peace. It is particular; it individualizes its objects. The man in whom charity has become a pervasive temper is hopeful with respect to humanity at large; but he is hopeful also with respect to individual men and women whom he knows, — hopeful that the erring will see the error of their ways and turn to the right; hopeful that the weak will become strong; hopeful that the bad will at last come out of their badness into the wisdom and health and beauty of holiness. Love develops in one a personal interest in the experiences and the possibilities of others; it interweaves his life with theirs, and brings the real oneness of mankind into consciousness so that it ceases to be an abstraction serviceable merely to speculative philanthropists, and becomes a vital element in all his thinking, feeling, and action. The hope which the Christian man cherishes for himself he cherishes for others also; and this hope becomes a formative influence in his life. It remedies the narrowness of his formal creed; it affects his opinions of men, freeing those opinions from injustice and bitterness; it puts warmth and helpfulness into his words; and it

impels to actions that work incessantly toward the realization of his hope by making men better, wiser, and happier.

When the world says of the fallen soul, "He is gone; nothing can be done for him; let him go," love says: "No; there is hope, for there is life, and there is God; I believe in God the Father Almighty." Pagan peoples used to expose to death the weak and helpless — for example, sickly infants, and sometimes the aged — as unprofitable burdens to be got rid of as soon as possible. The world is still pagan, except as it has been penetrated and transformed by the spirit of Jesus Christ. The weak often are pushed to the wall; they are pitilessly thrown aside to sink and perish. Sometimes you hear it said: "That man is not worth saving." But love has hope for even the lost, and in heroic, divine contradiction of the world's dogmatic cynicism, it seeks just those who are lowest, and bears, believes, and hopes for them.

4. *Charity endureth all things.* In these words is expressed the unconquerable patience of love. When all else is gone, this is a fortress in which it abides. When it can no longer cover and shield; when seemingly it is denied the possibility of belief, and cannot

even hope save by a desperate *tour-de-force*, — then it endures, holding fast its sweetness of spirit, and continuing in gentle strength to the end. No one has learned what patience is until he has learned to love in some such way as God loves. In love is the secret of God's long-suffering.

But enduring all things does not by any means necessarily imply loss of belief and hope with reference to love's object; it is rather the result and culmination of believing all things and hoping all things. When the heart believes and hopes it can endure.

The endurance of love is no grim and stoical quality. It is a patience full of brightness; it is a fortitude, the strength of which lies in the very depth of the heart's tenderness. The love that bears and covers faults and offences, also bears with them, — puts up with that which is disagreeable and troublesome, and is in no way diverted from its good intention by the obstruction of things unlovely and evil.

This is, perhaps, the very highest quality of character, — the charity that endures. A man may be upright and yet be overcome by the ills of life. The vices and faithlessness of his fellow-men may drive him into harshness of temper and bitterness of speech; but the man

whose uprightness is the vertebral column of a robust and beautiful charity is invincible in goodness.

But lest we seem to be dealing with fair but impracticable abstractions, let us consider the theme from a personal and practical point of view. Charity is something to exemplify in conduct, not something about which to speculate and theorize. We come in daily contact with all sorts of people who have all sorts of dispositions and opinions. We frequently encounter people who weary or irritate or disgust us. The reason of their effect on us may lie partly in ourselves as well as in them; but, assuming that the fault is wholly or even mainly theirs, we can live with them, or near them, in any comfortable or wholesome way, only by fortifying ourselves with a strong and elastic charity. As it is, we often suffer and inflict many ugly raspings. The seeds of animosities and strifes, of contempts and hatreds, fly in the air; wherever they find a congenial soil, which they always do in the selfish heart, they take root and, like weeds, grow without cultivation. Only love can quench the bad life of these, and fill their places with the flowers of courtesy and kindness. If we take account only of the opinions and mental habits of men,

we find abundant scope for the exercise of forbearance. Often a difference of opinion on some question of mere theory will thrust sharp enmity between two minds. If we think ourselves right we cannot see that he who disagrees with us may also be right; he must be wrong; and so the assertion and defence of our personal opinion are sublimed into a vindication of truth, and the other man's divergence from our view becomes the measure of his divergence from the truth. Thus differences grow into antagonisms and strifes, where, possibly, both disputants are mistaken, or are simply looking at a subject from different points of view, like the knights in the fable. One declared that a shield which hung between them was gold; the other asserted that it was silver. After their debate had ripened into a combat, in which each received damaging blows, they discovered that the shield was gold on one side and silver on the other; both were right and both were wrong in their affirmations; both were entirely wrong in their spirit. The charitable man, while holding fast his convictions, holds them always subject to the revision which fuller knowledge may demand, and he respects the convictions of others, while he is patient with their faults and tender toward

their mistakes. His heart does not go down into the arena of debate, but spreads its broad mantle of toleration over all differences of belief. We are not to condone wickedness or disregard the sanctities of truth, for righteousness and truth are infinitely important; but we should be charitable to those whom we consider in error. Love always discriminates between the thought and the thinker; Calvin may condemn the heresy of Servetus, but he may not guiltlessly burn Servetus at the stake, nor even think vengefully of him.

A true charity also qualifies our opinion of other men's characters. If we have a right spirit we shall be slow to think evil of our fellow-men; and we shall be gentle toward their foibles, not making a mock of them and fastening upon them the stigma of our ridicule and scorn. We shall be slow to impute evil motives; and we shall take account of weakness and withhold condemnation. That is a noble counsel of the apostle's; take it for a motto: "Be swift to hear; slow to speak; slow to wrath." That describes the true judicial temper and attitude. Jesus said: "It is better to save life than to destroy;" these words have a far wider range of application than perhaps we have thought. You may kill with a word

as well as with a bullet; and the slaying of hope or of courage in a brother's heart may be a more grievous murder than smiting the life out of the body. Few of us appreciate the tremendous influence on those about us of our opinions and speech concerning them. What we think of children who are in any way under our influence, and what we say about them, often determine the moral tendency of their lives. Even in maturer years many are so susceptible to this influence that they are lifted up or cast down by a little talk. Many a young man, fighting his way against heavy odds, has won a victory by the force of some one's faith in him. Who has not felt all his better nature roused and invigorated by the thought: "Some one has confidence in me; some one cares for me; some one thinks I can be true and good."

I doubt not that many a man is in a convict's cell to-night, or in his grave, for want of some such word, for want of that charity toward him which suffereth long and is kind; which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

But charity should rule action as well as speech. An unkind deed is a wicked deed, and often a horribly harmful deed; nay, there is even an element of baseness and cowardli-

ness in unkind action. The really brave man is never cruel; for bravery is far more than physical courage, it is moral, and has in it a heart of womanly tenderness. There are many men who have so great a scorn of effeminacy that they forget the truth that manliness and strength and bravery are most highly developed only in the soul that is fullest of love. Young men are rather apt to confound gentleness with weakness; and sometimes are ashamed to be kind lest they seem lacking in manly force and fibre. Let them remember that the gentleman is the *gentle* man. There is profound truth in Thomas Dekker's characterization of Jesus Christ as

“The first true gentleman that ever breathed.”

It is ever a defect of charity that makes the strong cruel, and the fearless brutal. There is little room for any pure virtue where love is not, for love in its highest development is the sum of all virtues.

It is a pertinent question, especially at this time when we stand on the threshold of a new year: What is our daily habit of speech and conduct with respect to our fellow-creatures? There is no doubt that the answer to this question will have large place in the final judgment

on our lives; for by so much as we have in our hearts a true love of man, have we a true love of God. Recall Leigh Hunt's beautiful lines: —

“Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
'What writest thou?' — The vision raised its head,
And, with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, — 'The names of those who love the Lord.'
'And is mine one?' said Abou; 'Nay, not so,'
Replied the angel. — Abou spake more low,
But cheerly still; and said, 'I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.'
The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
He came again, with a great wakening light,
And showed their names whom love of God had blest —
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.”

An apostle wrote: “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen! And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.” There is no true love of God apart from true love of man; and “the only thing opposed to love of God is love of self,” or selfishness. This is in essence the

sum-total of Jesus's teaching: "On these two" — love of God with all the heart, and love of neighbor as self — "hang all the law and the prophets." Thus are religion and philanthropy joined in holy wedlock by divine bonds; what God hath joined together let not man put asunder.

How may we attain this charity, this perfect grace, which we have been considering? Not by mere will-work; not merely by hard schooling of ourselves in ways of patience and kindness and prompt service to all need, — but rather by the inspiring and uplifting and transforming touch of a great, divine personality. Companionship with the son of God is the perfect school of charity. Learning from him how to love, we shall love not him alone, but all whom he loved; and he loved the whole world. Charity has its deep root in the capacity for the divine within the soul. In that knowledge and love of God which come to us through the quickening contact with us of Jesus Christ is the springing fountain of all pure graces and sweet dispositions. Charity and love are one, and love never faileth; it is of God, and its strong heart beats to the music of God's eternal life and joy.

ETHICS OF AMUSEMENT.

IT is not possible for the bow always to be bent, nor for frail human nature to maintain itself without some lawful recreation. — CERVANTES.

Sport and merriment are at times allowable; but we must enjoy them as we do sleep and other kinds of repose, when we have performed our weighty and important affairs. — CICERO.

You can't live on amusement. It is the froth on water, — an inch deep, and then the mud. — GEORGE MACDONALD.

I would persuade you to extricate yourselves from the giggling crowd, and hold that life may be worth living even if it does not provide you with a stunning amusement every twenty-four hours. — THEODORE T. MUNGER.

Amusements are to religion like breezes of air to the flame: gentle ones will fan it, but strong ones will put it out. — DAVID THOMAS.

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by any. — SAINT PAUL.

THE early, though now nearly obsolete, meaning of amusement was “deep thought, meditation, revery.” Whatever occupied or deeply engaged the mind was said to amuse the mind, — for example, in an old English book I find the following: “Here I put my pen into the inkstand and fell into a strong and

deep *amusement*, revolving in my mind with great perplexity the amazing change of our affairs." Thomas Fuller, in his "Church History of Britain," makes a similar use of the word when he says: "Being *amused* with grief, fear, and fright, he could not find a house in London (otherwise well-known to him) whither he intended to go." Holland, in his translation of Livy, says: "Camillus set upon the Gauls when they were *amused* in receiving their gold." This meaning comes naturally from the derivation of the word, which is the Old French *a muser*, "to muse, to meditate;" hence, the occupation of an idle dreamer was called *amusement*. At last, and quite recently, "amusement" was exclusively appropriated to designate that which agreeably detains or engages the mind, and is synonymous with pastime, diversion, entertainment, recreation, sport. So much for the technical meaning of the word. True amusement involves that diversion by which the activities of the mind or the body, or both, are changed, the tension of nerves relaxed, and the mental and physical forces, which have been exhausted by work and care, restored to freshness and vigor.

Indulgence in certain kinds of reading, certain forms of exercise, and certain spectacles, as

of games or plays, may be cited as examples of amusement. It is impossible here to define the specific forms which amusement may take; what is diverting differs with different persons. Strength, temperament, degree of culture, habit and training, all enter into the determination of forms of amusement. What is entertaining to one person often is not entertaining to another person; what pleases and refreshes at one time does not please and refresh the same person at another time. The important definition here is the one which defines amusement in a general way as that diversion of the mind which produces refreshment and reinvigoration of the whole nature.

Amusement, then, cannot rightly be the regular occupation or main business of life; it must be subordinate to serious work. It is ministrant to the main end by reducing friction and checking exhaustion. The moment amusement becomes an occupation, that moment it ceases to be true amusement. The professional jester amuses others, but his vocation is not properly an amusement to himself; and the votary of pleasure who seeks only to be amused, by-and-by loses the capacity of being amused.

More than that, the attempt to make amusement a business of life is almost sure to have

very ill effects on character. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy;" but all play and no work makes Jack a foolish if not a vicious boy, unprofitable both to himself and to others.

We are so constituted that we have a capacity for amusement; to lose that capacity is a heavy misfortune. Our nature and our work in the world are such that we need amusement; and the need is proportioned to the gravity and intensity of our work.

Our capacity for amusement and our need of amusement, together with the possibility that amusement may be perverted from a means into an end, and also may be infected with vice or ruled by selfishness, or exaggerated into damaging excess, bring amusement within the field of morals, and make "The Ethics of Amusement" at once a practical and important subject for consideration.

Experience and reflection alike attest the importance of this subject; it is a subject often ill-understood, and often treated superficially or unreasonably. The Church has erred in its treatment of this subject, even while actuated by the best motives.

Intelligence and good sense are the best coadjutors of true piety in dealing with the question of amusements. Harm is done on the one hand

by indiscriminate and unjust condemnation of certain forms of amusement, and equal harm, perhaps, is done on the other hand by laxity and indifference that result from a want of clearly defined principles and strong conviction.

To this vexed yet slowly clarifying question we may apply at the outset certain principles of exclusion:—

1. That which does not healthily divert the mind and rest the body is not true amusement;

2. That which is essentially evil is not true amusement;

3. That indulgence which is excessive, and therefore in effect vicious, is not true amusement;

4. That which, in itself morally indifferent and to others harmless, is yet harmful to *you*, is for *you* not a true amusement. The harmfulness may lie in the fact that, because of peculiar susceptibility on your part, the amusement has the effect of lowering your moral tone, wounding your spiritual sensibility, and hindering the development of your best life.

Aside from these simple principles of exclusion, almost all specific rules on this subject are unsatisfactory and inadequate; the Procrustean method is false as well as cruel. Jesus Christ, the best teacher of essential ethics that the world

has ever seen, did not give rules for the government of life. The Pharisees did that; the Pharisees do it still. But Jesus gave principles, and these principles he imparted in a spirit of life rather than in specific precepts; the few precepts which he did give are only particular applications of the fundamental principles of the spirit of life.

Life is the true guide of life. The spirit and point of view of Jesus serve us better than any system of rules, for these are radical and underlie all right conduct. The highest principle of life, the principle which Jesus gives us in his spirit and point of view, is the principle of love: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." I say nothing now about the preceding word: "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart," for in essence these two are one. Love of God and love of man are indivisible in fact, however widely we may have separated them in our theories; sometimes, alas, they are made theoretically oppugnant, almost mutually exclusive.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself:" here is the spring of all sound and sufficient ethical principles. There is a true self-love that is not only perfectly accordant with a true love of our neighbor, but is also its norm.

Under this general principle of love, the ethical character of amusements is determined:—

1. *By the effect of amusements on self.* Amusement, being not strictly an end but a means, in order to be ethically sound, that is right, ought to have the effect on ourselves of wholesome diversion and rest. It ought to refresh our minds and bodies, restore the disturbed balance of our powers, and leave us toned up for the best kind of life. It should minister, in this way, to the best that is in us; it should make easier our best work. Lest I seem to give too positive and high a function to amusement, let me say that, at least, it must not have an effect contrary to that which I have described; it must not, while relaxing the tension, let down the essential tone of our minds to a low level; it must not hurt or debase our finer sensibilities. It must not cheapen duty, nor wound our consciences, nor lessen our taste for the good and the true; it must not render us any less sensitive to spiritual influences, nor cloud the vision of the inner eye.

Of course any sort of diversion that harms us physically should be rigorously excluded. But many are prompt to recognize the truth of this statement, who do not as quickly and as profoundly appreciate the importance of guarding our higher nature from hurtful invasion.

We ought always to keep in mind the true values of life. Always the spiritual should dominate the physical; the higher is meant to give the law to the lower. This is not to assent for a moment to the old Manichean error that the body is evil, and that holiness consists chiefly if not solely in crushing down and eradicating all the instincts and impulses which have their seat and source in the flesh. From the ideal point of view, which is ever the true spiritual point of view, Browning is right when he exclaims, —

“ All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more
Now than flesh helps soul ! ”

But in our slow emergence from the animal, which is the bestial and selfish, we need continually to be on our guard that the nascent and delicate life of the spirit be not choked and suppressed by the flesh.

Enjoyment of mirth and pleasure is an incident and accompaniment of life, not its end; a needed interruption of strenuous toil, not its object. As “the life is more than meat and the body than raiment,” so the play and frolic of our leisure hours are to wait upon and be subservient to the great aims and aspirations and endeavors of the soul.

It should be clearly understood that amusement, by the refreshment which it brings, is meant to lessen the friction of labor, not to usurp the place of labor; and, therefore, if amusement in any way hinders high thought, or brings any taint of impurity into the mind, or hurts the spirit, indulgence in it is a wrong done to self. The noble self-regard of love condemns it, and the wisdom of love excludes it.

The ethical character of amusements is determined:—

2. *By the effect of our amusements on others.* Our diversion must work no ill to our neighbors; here love is imperative. That which amuses me, but at the same time does harm to some one else, by its very harmfulness to him becomes unlawful to me. To indulge self at another's expense violates the supreme law of love. The application of this principle is very wide. There is need here of careful and discriminating thought, for the application of the principle must be made, for the most part, by each one for himself. On the mere physical plane it is easy to see that amusement which causes material damage, or even annoyance, to our neighbor ought to be abandoned. Indeed, on this plane our neighbor has protection and redress afforded him by the laws of the land,

at least within certain large limits. But the worst damage which by our selfishness we inflict upon others is not material. It is an evil thing to maim a brother in body, or to injure his possessions; but this sort of harm is trifling compared with the harm we may do to the mind or feelings or spiritual life of our brother. There is no human legislation which covers the wide field of our deeper moral relations. There is no effective protection of men from our strongest and subtlest influence, save that which itself is spiritual, — either the impregnable character of others, or our own strong and clear-sighted self-restraint. Saint Paul once said, “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” It is a noble sentiment, springing from the very heart of Christ; it is the same as, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” And the self-regulation which this sentiment imposes is not put upon us from without; its great merit lies in the fact that it rises spontaneously in the loving and chastened heart. It is not an external law that you shall not cause your brother to stumble by doing that which, pleasant and harmless for yourself, is yet, because of his weakness, harmful to him; it is the mandate of love in your heart,

— that love which can joyfully suppress self for the sake of conferring a benefit on another or warding from him a danger. A fine example of what I mean, and one that is well known, though it is often misinterpreted and misapplied, is that furnished by Saint Paul, where he says: "If eating meat cause my brother to stumble," — that is, if my eating food which has been consecrated to idols (a thing wholly unimportant and harmless to me) cause my brother, not yet freed from superstition, to do the same thing, thereby wounding his weak conscience and letting him down on a plane where he is sure to fall into real sin, — if my eating meat cause this damage to my brother, "I will eat no meat while the world stands." This is the language and act of heroic unselfishness, in the exercise of which one tastes a pleasure such as no coveted indulgence can give. "I can afford," says the true soul, "to forego this or that gratification of my appetites; but I cannot afford to burden or wound a brother in his struggle upward into the life of the spirit."

Now, apply this principle to the matter of amusements. It is high ground for us to occupy; but we ought to be unwilling to take any lower ground. When we have attained to

a nobler manhood and womanhood, we shall be incapable of taking any lower ground.

The principle which I have been setting forth often is misapplied and abused. That increases the difficulty of truly applying the principle, perhaps; but the difficulty must not defeat our purpose to live in accordance with its lofty morality. Often assumed weakness is nothing more than contentiousness and censoriousness; often the "weak" brother who demands the application of this principle in his own behalf is in need of sharp discipline rather than of concession to his demands. He is, in the moral realm, what the "dead beat" is in the economic realm; he raises a false issue and sets up a false standard of judgment.

Saint Paul's words have been used sometimes as a justification of a kind of moral meddlesomeness which masquerades under the garb of zeal for moral reform. The apostle encountered it, and roundly rebuked it with the words: "Who art thou that judgest thy brother? To his own Master he standeth or falleth." We encounter it still, with a miserable perversion of Saint Paul's words in its mouth. Never mind; the principle of self-denial for another's sake is sound and wise and beneficent. It is the principle of love, which is the principle of

Christ, and is, at bottom, the principle of essential righteousness. Get the principle clearly apprehended in your minds and deeply rooted in your hearts, and the application of it to specific cases will be as instinctive as breathing, and as unerring as human action ever is.

There is wide scope for pure and refreshing amusement. No one's real liberty is abridged by love; for what love clearly forbids belongs to the realm not of liberty, but of bondage,—the bondage of selfishness. The right course is to have nothing to do with any amusements which, by the weakness of those about you, are made harmful to their best life.

These principles which, of necessity, are here stated so briefly, and which there is not space now more fully to illustrate, furnish the true and sufficient ethical test of all kinds of amusement. There is no rule, and no set of rules, by which we can determine off-hand the rightfulness or wrongfulness of any specific amusements that in themselves are not intrinsically evil. Such as are intrinsically evil are not, of course, true amusements, and lie outside of our present field of discussion. But what of games, dancing, and play-going? These and many other sorts of diversion in vogue among men cannot be, with any justice, cate-

gorically pronounced right or wrong. They may be innocent, or they may be noxious, according to time, circumstance, and individual conditions. Whether they are innocent or noxious in each particular case must be determined by the application of these tests, — the effect on self, and the effect on others. The effect, moreover, must not be measured only by physical or mental standards, but also by a spiritual standard. We are bound to seek the best life always, both for others and for ourselves. Whatever makes against the best life must be let alone, if we would climb upward and help upward those who are about us.

There is, then, no easy, prescriptive way of settling this question of the ethical character of amusements. Many wish that there were such a way. To those it would be a relief to have the church or the pastor pronounce authoritatively with reference to this matter. It is easier to obey an explicit command than to determine one's course by the exercise of intelligence and judgment. Many times the question is put to the Christian minister: "May I do this? May I have that?" Rightly, young children to a large degree must be subject to authority; for a child can be trained in moral habits before he can apprehend moral

principles, and the experience and judgment of parents and teachers must protect him from evils that he can neither see nor understand. Even in the case of children the authority is only temporary, and is but as a fence about a growing tree until it has attained a certain height and strength.

“Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree, — how its stem
trembled first
Till it passed the kid’s lip, the stag’s antler; then safely
outburst
The fan-branches all round.”

But prescription in morals has narrow limits. No matter how much we may wish, in moments of weakness or perplexity, to escape the necessity of deciding moral questions for ourselves, we cannot do so. This is the permanent and essential condition of the moral life, that each must make decisions for himself. Seek advice from those whose knowledge and wisdom you trust; exercise a careful observation, for thus you will learn much that will be of highest value in forming your judgments; profit by the experience of others; and study and grasp the principles of right conduct which are set before you in the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. All this will help you; but, after all, you must make decisions, and the product of

decisions is character, and character is at once life and destiny. The choice of amusements, and the decisions by which indulgence in them is regulated, are as essential a part of your moral discipline in the world as the choice of your main work in life and the successive decisions by which you prosecute that work to its justifying end.

While, then, on the question of the wrongfulness and evil of sin, either as a diversion or as a serious engagement, there is a clear "Thus saith the Lord," as well as a clear Thus saith human experience, which is only another form of "Thus saith the Lord;" on the question of the rightness or wrongness of a specific act that in itself is morally indifferent and becomes wrong only in certain relations and under certain circumstances, there is no categorical imperative. The large principle of love to God and self and fellow-man furnishes the only, but sufficient, guide to decisions which each must make for himself. It is in making these choices that the soul grows into the strength and liberty of righteousness, or sinks into the bondage and weakness of habitual self-indulgence.

In conclusion, I offer you some words of counsel which, without supplying any facti-

tious authority, without giving you crutches where you need a tonic, will, I humbly hope, aid you in making the decisions that should control your indulgence in amusements of whatever sort.

1. Do not indulge in any amusements, however lawful they may seem to you, simply because others indulge in them. Stand on your own feet; learn your own weaknesses and dangers, and never be ashamed of avoiding that which may do you needless physical harm, or which may take the fine edge off your moral perception, or lower the tone of your spiritual life. Perhaps another can do what you cannot do without great risk and even actual damage. Cultivate the moral courage to think and act for yourself, under the high duty of moral self-preservation. If you cannot dance without going to excess, or without leaving a shadow of compunction on your conscience, or without dropping down a little in your spiritual tone, then be strong enough and brave enough to accept your limitations, and say "No" to the fascinating invitation. If you cannot go to the theatre without having the fibre of your feeling strained or coarsened, or without having an unreal coloring and an unwholesome flavor imparted to your life, then be brave

enough and strong enough to turn your back on the theatre. If you cannot play certain games without being tempted to do that which would bring a blush to your cheek when you pray "Lead us not into temptation," then be brave enough and strong enough to forswear those games, however innocent in themselves they may appear to be.

These specific cases are cited here merely as representative examples. The principle is, do only that, even for fun and pleasure, which you can do with entire safety to your best life.

2. Keep continually in mind that all amusements which are essentially selfish are, for that very reason, to be rejected as evil. However attractive they may be, they are malign, and therefore, in consideration of the true ends of life, are not in any just sense legitimate. All indulgence of pleasure that is selfish is attractive only to the mind that is unresponsive to the sweet attraction of pure benevolence.

3. In all things avoid excess. Most sins are sins of abuse. Excess is an immoral inversion of values and uses. There is a certain truth in the saying, "There may be too much of a good thing." It is more accurate to say that whatever passes the golden mean of moderation ceases to be good; the goodness

passes out as the excess comes in. Intemperance is always a vice, in playing as truly as in drinking wine; and intemperance always weakens and harms its victim. An occasional visit to a clean theatre may give rest to the tired brain and refreshment to the jaded sensibilities. Continuous play-going, especially to the average theatre, rarely, if ever, benefits one; on the contrary, it is almost sure to deprave both mind and heart, and to destroy zest for the real, every-day life of the world. That there are exceptions to this may be taken for granted, but the exceptions are rare. The moment the line of pure refreshment and of rest, or of wholesome mental stimulus, is passed, that moment evil begins.

4. Finally, deliberately make amusement wholly subordinate to the high and noble ends of life, — to the best thought, the purest feeling, and the worthiest work. There are many pure amusements that fortify virtue as well as divert the mind. Fun has rightly a large place in life; often laughter is the most medicinal thing that can come into our lives. Sombreness is not conducive to health of body or of soul. We need more real mirth, not less; we need more play than most of us have. Labor often becomes a slavery. Let us meet the

grim struggles and trials of life with a brave gayety; but let us remember also that amusements, as they are commonly understood, have only a relatively small place in an earnest life. As one's capacities become enlarged, his tastes purified, and his aims exalted, he has less and less concern over the question of "the ethics of amusement," at least on his own account. He finds that the richest pleasures are highest up. As the spirit attains more, the senses demand less. There is a world of beauty and light and joy about and above us. In the progress of man toward the good and the true, new delights are continually disclosing themselves to his eye, and pleasure is sublimed into joy that brings no sorrow and wherein is no excess. He who rises into the life of the spirit learns soon the meaning of Saint Paul's words: "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by any." He learns also the true, deep meaning of Saint Augustine's words: "Love, and do all things."

What I have been saying implicitly in all this discussion, I now say explicitly: Take the spirit of life which Jesus reveals as the guide of your life; let love rule. Let him, the Son of God, the Lover and Saviour and

Lord of your soul, give at once the law and the unwasting impulse of your life. He will lead you into sweet and lasting health; he will give you the sure wisdom which solves the problems of each day as it comes, because it is the ever-transparent, inevitable wisdom of God.

There is enduring happiness as well as enduring profit only in the life that rings true to the stroke of Jesus's saying: "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." I cannot do better than to close with the brave, strong words of Thomas Carlyle: "Love not pleasure; love God. This is the everlasting Yea wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and works, it shall be well with him."

READING.

A GOOD book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.
— MILTON.

In books lie the creative Phœnix-ashes of the whole Past. All that men have devised, discovered, done, felt, or imagined, lies recorded in Books; wherein whoso has learned the mystery of spelling printed letters, may find it, and appropriate it.
— CARLYLE.

In books we find the dead as it were living; in books we foresee things to come. These are the masters who instruct us without rods and ferules, without hard words and anger. If you approach them, they are not asleep; if investigating you interrogate them, they conceal nothing; if you mistake them, they never grumble; if you are ignorant, they cannot laugh at you. — RICHARD DE BURY.

Far more seemely were it for thee to have thy studie full of Bookes, than thy Purse full of money. — JOHN LYLIE.

We are now in want of an art to teach how books are to be read rather than to read them. — DISRAELI.

Who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
Uncertain and unsettled still remains;
Deep-versed in books, but shallow in himself.

MILTON.

A few books well-studied, and thoroughly digested, nourish the understanding more than hundreds but gargled in the mouth. — FRANCIS OSBORNE.

Who of us can tell
 What he had been, had Cadmus never taught
 The art that fixes into form the thought —
 Had Plato never spoken from his cell,
 Or his high harp blind Homer never strung ?

LORD LYTTON.

He who loveth a book will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counsellor, a cheerful companion, or an effectual comforter. — BARROW.

Till I come give attendance to reading. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning. — SAINT PAUL.

WE live in an age of many books. The press has become a fountain that never intermits, but pours forth an ever-increasing stream. If the writer of Ecclesiastes could say in the third century B. C., "of making many books there is no end," what would he say in the present time? But the multitude of books coming into existence every year is not primarily cause but effect. The supply is great because there is great demand. In America, at least, the habit of reading has grown until we have become a nation of readers ; we read everything and for every sort of reason. Aside from the ordinary motive of reading for information, we read for amusement, diverting ourselves with the record of million-fold fact and fancy. We read for consolation, abstracting ourselves from

troubles in the atmosphere of books; we read for stimulus, taking deep draughts of the wine of passion or speculation distilled in romance or poem or essay; we read for discipline, sharpening our minds for action by whetting them on other minds crystallized in argument or exposition. We read to "kill time," and we read to save time, -- borrowing ideas which we are too impatient or too indolent to work out for ourselves. We read when we are well, and when we are sick; when we are at home, and when we travel; when we eat, and almost when we sleep.

From one point of view we read far too much; from another point of view we read far too little. The explanation of this paradox will appear when we arrive at a clear idea of what we ought to read, and how we ought to read.

Reading sustains a very important relation to our mental and moral life. An analysis of the books which a man habitually reads will reveal at once the quality of his mind and the tendency of his character. If I find a young woman absorbed in the works of Mrs. Southworth or the author of "Airy, fairy Lilian," I am at once of the opinion that she will never startle her friends with the profundity or originality of her thoughts. If I find a young man devoted to Emile Zola or the Police Gazette, I am not sur-

prised by-and-by to learn that his name has appeared in the records of the criminal court. "It is nearly an axiom," said Bishop Potter, "that people will not be better than the books they read."

1. Consider the relation of reading to mental culture. It is evident that the largest and most available source of knowledge is that which is furnished by books. What men thought and suffered and did in the remote past is revealed in the language which they spoke, and the inscriptions, tablets, and papyrus or parchment rolls by which their language has been preserved and handed down to succeeding ages. The human instinct for making records of experience and observation is a sort of universal reporter whose pencil never pauses. Art, Science, Travel, Commerce, War, Government, Religion, Law, Pleasure, Crime, Love, Hate, all have their memorial in books. Everything that men think and feel and do sometime gets reported, so that a single library may epitomize the experience of the race, and make us sharers in it. Time and space are annihilated for us by books: we sit by our firesides, and, with Homer, gaze upon the battle-swept plain of Ilium; with Eschylus we wander by the blue, resplendent Ægean, listening to "the mul-

titudinous laughter” of its waves, or kneel with Orestes in the shrine at Delphi, shadowed by the inescapable Furies; with Plato we discourse of Reason and the Ideal amid the groves of the Academy; with Cæsar we penetrate the forests of Gaul and Britain, and watch the hordes of white-limbed savages fly before the iron legions of Rome; with Saint Luke and Saint John we journey from Bethlehem to Nazareth and from Capernaum to Calvary in the company of Jesus; with Paul the Apostle we traverse Syria and Asia Minor, and hear the gospel preached in the busy streets of Ephesus or on the templed Acropolis of Athens; with Newton and Proctor we sweep the expanse of the starry heavens; with Faraday and Tyndall we penetrate the secrets of Nature’s Laboratory, and with Lyell and Dana we read the ancient story of the rocks; with Livingstone and Stanley we explore “the Dark Continent;” with Williams and Gray we survey the antique civilization of China, and with Miss Bird and Miss Scidmore we ride through the blossom-covered fields of Japan; with Monier Williams and Max Müller we hear the Indian priests of Brahm and Buddha chant their solemn prayers. The world is bound in muslin and laid upon our tables. The imagination staggers in its attempt to grasp

the wealth of knowledge that has been stored in the printed page. The Arabian fable of the genie whose head touched the clouds, but whose vast bulk could be compressed within the narrow space of a fisherman's flask, has been outdone; the power to read opens to us the treasures of universal knowledge.

"Certainly," says Carlyle, that master of book-writing, "the art of writing is the most miraculous of all things man has devised. Odin's *Runes* were the first form of the work of a Hero; *Books*, written words, are still miraculous *Runes*, the latest form! In Books lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream. Mighty fleets and armies, harbours and arsenals, vast cities, high-domed, many-engined, — they are precious, great: but what do they become? Agamemnon, the many Agamemnons, Pericleses, and their Greece; all is gone now to some ruined fragments, dumb mournful wrecks and blocks: but the Books of Greece! There Greece, to every thinker, still very literally lives; can be called up again into life. No magic *Rune* is stranger than a Book. All that mankind has done, thought, gained, or been: it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages

of Books. They are the chosen possession of men.

“Do not *Books* still accomplish *miracles*, as *Runes* were fabled to do? They persuade men. Not the wretchedest circulating-library novel, which foolish girls thumb and con in remote villages, but will help to regulate the actual practical weddings and households of those foolish girls. So ‘Celia’ felt, so ‘Clifford’ acted: the foolish Theorem of Life, stamped into those young brains, comes out as a solid Practice one day. Consider whether any *Rune* in the wildest imagination of mythologist ever did such wonder as, on the actual firm Earth, some Books have done! What built St. Paul’s Cathedral? Look at the heart of the matter, it was that divine Hebrew BOOK.”

But reading does more than give us access to knowledge; it furnishes a most important means of mental stimulus and discipline. If our reading is wise, the mind is nourished and all our faculties are developed and trained by what we read. Reading is not absolutely essential to acuteness and strength of mind, but it is necessary for breadth of knowledge, and, for most of us, it is the necessary means of discipline.

The influence of the books that we read upon our mental habit can scarcely be exaggerated.

We form our opinions from our favorite books. The author whom we most love is our most potent teacher; we look at the world through his eyes. If we habitually read books that are elevated in tone, pure in style, sound in reasoning, and keen in insight, our minds take on the same qualities. If, on the contrary, we read weak or vicious books, our minds contract the faults and vices of the books. We cannot escape the influence of what we read any more than we can escape the influence of the air that we breathe.

2. Consider the relation of reading to morals. There are books that have no moral quality, good or bad, — such, for example, as treat of the exact sciences; Olney's *Geometry*, or Hardy's *Quaternions*, has no more immediate relation to morals than the multiplication table has. But most books have a distinct moral quality derived either from the subject or the author, or from both. Works of imagination derive their moral quality chiefly from their authors; though this is by no means without exception, for sometimes an apparently corrupt man produces work that is without a stain. Occasionally genius seems to transcend all conditions. Works of history and travel derive their moral quality from both author and subject. Now, as our

mental quality and bent are very largely determined by our habitual reading, so also our moral sentiments and tastes, and our ideals of excellence, in short, our characters, are profoundly affected by what we read. The influence of books is more subtle and, if they are read in youth, is even more permanent than the influence of associates. An evil companion may lead us into temporary wrong-doing from which, in soberer moments, our whole nature recoils; but an evil book penetrates all defences, and poisons our life at its sources of thought and motive. Examples abound of the effect which reading has on character and conduct. Many a boy has gone to sea and become a rover for life, under the influence of Marryat's novels. Abbott's "Life of Napoleon," read at the age of seven years, sent one boy whom I knew to the army before he was fourteen. The vicious novels, such as "Claude Duval," "Dick Turpin," and "Sixteen-string Jack," which were still current thirty years ago, made many a highwayman and midnight marauder. The chaplain of Newgate prison in London, in one of his annual reports to the Lord-Mayor, referring to many fine-looking lads of respectable parentage in the city prison, said that he discovered, "that all these boys, without one exception, had been

in the habit of reading those cheap periodicals " which were published for the alleged amusement of the youth of both sexes. There is not a police-court or a prison in this country where similar cases could not be found. No one can measure the moral ruin that has been caused in this generation by the influence of bad books.

While youth is the period of greatest impressibility, and therefore of greatest peril, maturity does not, of itself, bring absolute safety from the influence of corrupt literature. Character in this world never gets beyond the possibility of being bettered or worsened; few are so fortified in virtuous habit that they can with impunity bring their minds into prolonged contact with an evil book.

Some years ago I visited, in a Western city, a family with which I had been long acquainted in the comparatively pure atmosphere of an inland village. The family consisted of husband and wife, still in the freshness and vigor of early manhood and womanhood, and two beautiful boys. As I sat in the snug parlor conversing with the wife, I saw upon the table a copy of an execrable sheet that shall be nameless here; it was evidently a weekly visitor, and in some sense representative of the literature that was coming into that home. Soon I took my de-

parture with troubled and foreboding thoughts. Not many months later, being in the city again, I called on the family and was met at the door by a strange face. Asking for Mrs. —, I was told that she did not live there; that she had left her husband, and they were divorced. The beautiful home was broken up, by no appreciable cause but the vitiating influence of corrupt reading and consequent evil associates. The incident left on my mind an impression never to be effaced.

The harmfulness of bad books is by no means confined to those books which are simply unclean. Many a man's moral life is perverted or debased by books that are not impure, as we commonly understand that term, but books that inculcate false principles. Who that is familiar with European history during the past three hundred years, does not know how baleful has been the influence of Machiavelli's "Prince," which made lying and treachery important elements of kingcraft and diplomacy. Disciples of that book even declared that it was often the duty of a sovereign to lie; and well did Philip II., Catherine de' Medici, Charles IX. of France, and even the great Elizabeth, exemplify such teaching. Indeed European diplomacy has not yet entirely

outgrown the influence of the Machiavellian idea.

Irreligious books also, the writings of cynics and of ignorant or insincere opponents to Christianity, have done great harm to many. By the propagation of false ideas of religion, such books have hindered the growth of a true faith, and have turned many who might have been helpers of their fellow-men toward God into advocates of irreligion. It is said that Voltaire, at the age of five years, read a skeptical poem, the impression of which made him the arch-scoffer of his century. From this bad eminence not even his services to religious liberty can wholly relieve him.

On the other hand good books have exerted an equally marked good influence. Benjamin Franklin, when a little boy, found an old copy of Cotton Mather's "Essay to do Good," and from it received that impulse toward beneficence and practical morality which even more than his statesmanship made his life illustrious and his character an inspiring example to American youth.

Let this thought abide in your minds, that what we read surely leaves its mark upon us for good or ill. It is then of utmost importance that we read only books which will

strengthen us in sound thinking, pure feeling, and right purpose. Again, as the number of books which any one can read is limited, and for most of us is quite small, it is specially important that we read only the best. It is not necessary that we should read a multitude of books; it is necessary, for our own good and the good of those whom we influence, that what we read should be worth reading. It is a virtue willingly to be ignorant of many books, especially if one seeks to know thoroughly books that are great and enduring.

There are two simple rules, easily remembered, that give an excellent answer to the question often asked, "What shall we read?" These rules are, *First: Read only pure books.* No matter how great may be the genius of an author, if his books are unclean he is not fit either to instruct or amuse; and those who seek intercourse with him do it at their peril. *Second: Read only, or at least chiefly, great books,* — I mean books that make solid contribution to the store of human knowledge, or impart to the soul a strong and noble inspiration.

There are a few books — Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Wordsworth, Browning, and the Bible — which, thoroughly

known, give to the mind a breadth and power of thought, a grace of culture, and an elevation of tone that a whole library of ordinary books cannot give. Most earnestly I press this counsel: Cultivate acquaintance with the great masters of the English tongue. Get Noah Porter's little volume entitled, "Books and Reading," and selecting from its ample lists a few of the best works in Science, History, Poetry, and Morals, read them until their substance has gone into your blood; then you will be rich in those qualities of mind and heart that make the humblest life noble and powerful for good.

Now I propose to give you a few thoughts on *how to read*. Very many fairly intelligent people do not know how to read; they can pronounce words and sentences, and understand their general meaning, but they have never learned so to read that through reading the mind shall receive knowledge and stimulus, and develop constantly in power of faculty and breadth of view. One main function of a college is to teach students the art of reading, — that is, the art of acquiring useful knowledge from books. The disciplined mind is the mind that can most quickly get out of a book what is in it for intellectual nutriment or use. One of

the very best results of his work in college which a student can bring away is the trained ability wisely to use a library.

In order to read profitably one must cultivate, (1) *The power of attention*, — that is, the power of fixing the mind upon a book, and keeping it fixed, until the faculties, focalized upon it as the sun-rays are focalized by a lens, burn their way to the very core of its meaning. Reading must be carried on not passively but actively, and even strenuously; the mind must work if it would receive real benefit. You cannot dawdle through a book and get anything valuable out of it. This is true with reference even to works of the imagination, such as great poems and novels. Indeed such writings can be grasped only when read with alert faculties and strenuous attention. Augustus William Hare said in his "Guesses at Truth," "For my own part, I have ever gained the most profit, and the most pleasure also, from the books which have made me think the most: and, when the difficulties have once been overcome, these are the books which have struck the deepest root, not only in my memory and understanding, but likewise in my affections." In a similar vein Colton suggestively remarked that "Many books require no thought from

those who read them, and for a very simple reason, — they made no such demand upon those who wrote them. Those works therefore are the most valuable that set our thinking faculties in the fullest operation.”

The fault of many novels, not essentially bad, is that they do not rouse the mind and give it exercise. And the vice of many novel-readers is the habit they have formed of going through chapter after chapter and volume after volume with the mind quiescent as if in reverie. If you would read profitably you cannot read lazily. Many read innumerable books of one sort and another, and seemingly get no benefit; they increase neither in knowledge nor in power. Doctor Johnson once said: “Read anything five hours a day, and you will soon be learned;” but this, like some other of the brusque Doctor’s sayings, must be taken with considerable qualification. There is wholesome truth in Robertson’s words: “Multifarious reading weakens the mind more than doing nothing; for it becomes a necessity at last, like smoking, and is an excuse for the mind to lie dormant whilst thought is poured in, and runs through, a clear stream, over unproductive gravel, on which not even mosses grow. It is the idlest of all idleness, and leaves more

of impotency than any other." The true art of reading he thus suggests in an autobiographical note: "I know what reading is, for I could read once, and did. I read hard, or not at all; never skimming, never turning aside to merely inviting books; and Plato, Aristotle, Butler, Thucydides, Sterne, Jonathan Edwards, have passed like the iron atoms of the blood into my mental constitution."

Attention in reading implies both aim and endeavor. What do you read a book for? Ask yourself that question and answer it. Have a definite object in reading, and then fix the attention as if you were digging for gold. If there is gold in the book you will find it. Exercise the judgment while reading, and follow Bacon's wise counsel: "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find Talk and Discourse, but to weigh and consider." But to do this you must address yourself to your book with wide-awake faculties and tenacious attention.

(2) *System* and *continuity* in reading are requisite to the best results. Mere miscellaneous reading has comparatively little value. As in making a journey you have starting-point, course, and destination, so in reading, begin somewhere and go somewhere along a

definite line. Many read as a butterfly floats in the air, fluttering here and there, making no progress and reaching no ascertainable end. They take up a book, read a few pages or chapters, and then abandon it for something else. An excellent plan is to read by subjects. For example, take the subject of the Reformation; then read Hallam's "Middle Ages," D'Aubigne's and Fisher's histories of the Reformation, Michelet's and Köstlin's lives of Luther, Robertson's "Charles V.," Prescott's "Philip II.," and Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic." Or, take the History of the United States; then read Parkman's works, Bancroft's "History of the United States," McMaster's "History of the People of the United States," Fiske's three or four volumes on American history, and the lives of Washington, Patrick Henry, the Adamses, Hamilton, Calhoun, Webster, and their great contemporaries. Or, again, take the Rise and Development of Christianity, and read the New Testament, Edersheim's or Geikie's "Life of Christ," Conybeare and Howson's "Life of Saint Paul," Farrar's "Early Days of Christianity," Uhlhorn's "Conflict of Christianity and Heathenism," and Schaff's or Fisher's "History of the Christian Church."

Subjects that are both interesting and of practical significance to all intelligent people are innumerable. History, Science, Art, Politics, Law, Literature, and Economics, with their manifold subdivisions, furnish inviting subjects of study. Let whatever subject you choose be the end toward which, for the time being, your reading is directed; and when you have chosen a subject keep it steadily before you until you have acquired clear knowledge of its general scope and have mastered its main facts and principles.

(3) Reading with attention and with system, seek to *possess the results of your reading*. A few books thoroughly mastered and digested are worth more than a whole library skimmed. Taking possession of what you read is not simply memorizing words or facts, but grasping principles. All valuable facts are but the symbols or illustrations of truths. To remember the facts without grasping the truths is like treasuring the shell of the oyster while the pearl drops into the sea. Therefore, in seeking to possess the results of your reading, strive to discover and understand the principles that underlie and inform all History, Art, Science, and Literature; if this is not achieved readily, then read again and again until it is

achieved. Two or three things you should do: *First*, make notes of important facts and ideas on the margins of your books, or on slips of paper to be preserved for easy reference. *Second*, meditate on what you read; learn to ruminate and digest what you mentally receive. A book that does not give you food for thought is scarcely worth reading, save for diversion in an hour of fatigue; and a reader who does not meditate on what he reads misses the main end of reading. True culture is the result not so much of the quantity read as of the amount digested. As Thomas Fuller pithily said: "Thou mayest as well expect to grow stronger by always eating as wiser by always reading. Too much overcharges Nature, and turns more into disease than nourishment. 'T is thought and digestion which makes books serviceable, and gives health and vigor to the mind." Meditation is the true preventive of mental dyspepsia.

Third, seek to get at the practical truth of what you learn, and reduce it to conduct. The highest result of mental activity and of culture is improved life. The end of truth is being. What we really learn goes into character. As food is to be taken up into the physical system and transformed into blood and bone and tissue

and force, so thoughts and truth are to become substance of spiritual being and energy of soul. Let the history of the world — the struggles and triumphs of men in the long march of human progress, their vices as well as their virtues, their mistakes and failures as well as their successes — make you better and wiser and stronger for your individual battle of life. Then your reading will be to you a source of power and a means of growth in all excellence of heart and mind; for not simply to know more than you did, but to become better than you were, is the true end of culture.

I now venture to suggest, very briefly, some things that you all ought to know. The suggestions are meant to serve as guides in the selection of subjects on which to read.

(1) You ought to know as much as possible about yourselves: about your own body, — its structure, capabilities, and needs, and how rightly to care for it and use it; about your own mind, — its nature, powers, and susceptibilities, and how to train and employ it in achieving worthy ends; about your own soul, — your relations to God and your fellow-men, your weaknesses and strengths, your duties and destiny. In a word, “know thyself.” You should, therefore, have some clear knowledge of anatomy,

physiology, and hygiene, of mental and moral science, and of religion.

(2) You ought to know much about your specific work. A careful study of your own business or profession,—be it farming, mechanics, trade, medicine, law, teaching, music, journalism,—is necessary to the highest success. There are valuable books on all the various occupations, the best of which you should seek to know and master. It is your duty to make the most of yourself, — both God and men require this of you; and you cannot do it unless you acquaint yourself with the best methods and the best attained results in your chosen vocation. The man who works in leather or iron ought to know the history and uses of those materials, or he works only on a little higher level than the machine that blindly stitches the one, or the steam-hammer that unconsciously forges the other. The young woman who has consecrated her fresh powers to the noble art of teaching ought to know the history and principles of her art, and seek to equal, and even to improve upon, the work of her predecessors.

(3) You ought to know as much as possible about the history and literature of your own country. The institutions in the midst of

which you have been nurtured, the laws by which you are protected, and the liberties which you enjoy, are all the fruit of somebody's thinking and suffering and achieving in the past. Knowledge of whence these came, and by whom they were wrought out, will stimulate true patriotism in you, and give you a higher appreciation of your privileges; you will thus become better citizens and broader-minded men and women.

(4) Finally, you ought to know something of the course of human progress, and the outlines of general history, ancient and modern. This will enable you to understand the true significance of the present; for the present has its roots in the past. Such knowledge as you need in this direction can be acquired with comparatively little difficulty. There are manuals of general history that are sufficiently comprehensive, and at the same time brief, to give you an intelligent idea of what humanity has thought and achieved in by-gone centuries. I note, as an example, Fisher's "Outline of Universal History;" this should be supplemented by such series as "Epochs of History" and "The Story of the Nations."

The chief element of history is the record of the great facts and the progressive illustration of the principles of morals and religion. It is

on the religious side of your nature that you are most closely and most vitally related to the past. For the awakening and the intelligent development of your own religious life you need to know both the history of revelation and the account of human experience as shaped by the divine purpose of redemption. The true significance of all history appears clearly only in the light of divine revelation; for God alone gives the key to the problem of time and the soul. You will miss the highest benefit of historical study unless you learn to trace the hand of God in history, and the gradual unfolding of God's purpose to lift man up out of bestiality and sin into the life of the spirit. The progress of the race is the slow but sure evolution of the Kingdom of God.

First, then, of all books for you to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" is the Bible. As history alone it has a value beyond that of any other equally ancient writings; as furnishing the true point of view for the right understanding of history, it is without a rival. The careful and habitual study of this sacred volume will be fruitful of many benefits. It stands above all others as a means of moral self-knowledge, of inspiration to faith and love, and of instruction in the aims and duties

of life. As a manual for the study of our mother tongue there is no book equal to the English Bible, with its nervous, sinewy, impressive, Saxon speech. The Bible is also a prime instrument of mental discipline and culture. There is no eloquence like that of the prophets; no religious poetry like that of the Psalms; no ethics like that of the Sermon on the Mount; no spiritual illumination like that of the Gospel of Saint John.

No one is uneducated who is thoroughly conversant with the letter and the spirit of the Bible. That great and precious book has trained many of the greatest masters of literary style; it has inspired the sublimest oratory and the divinest song. Whatever else you may neglect, you cannot afford to neglect the Bible. If men tell you that it is a book of fables, tell them that when they have produced something better in its influence on human life you will discard it, and not till then. Let the great truths, the lofty sentiments, the heroic examples, the pure counsels, and the inspiring hopes that have place and expression in that divine and indestructible book penetrate and possess your minds, and direct all your conduct; and whether you learn many other things or not, you will at least learn that

which will be of most service to you while you live, and of sweetest comfort when you die.

And now, what is the grand aim and end of reading? Is it self-improvement in knowledge and taste and mental power? But self-improvement for what? Culture may be selfish, and selfish culture leads away from the chief ends of life. The aim of self-improvement must be the better service of God through bettered quality of life and heightened efficiency in serving humanity. All of right desire, aspiration, impulse, and endeavor terminates here. You belong to God; in His service alone can your true destiny be attained. The grand motive of self-culture is divine love; that love creates motive both to know and to do. Without the love of God life loses all that is most hopeful and uplifting; with that love comes into your heart a divine impulse that will not be exhausted here, but will sweetly impel you toward all excellence hereafter and forever. Time is but the opportunity for beginning true culture. That opportunity is yours; it is offered to every soul that is bold enough to seize it. No adverse circumstances exclude you; the aristocracy of noble mind is open to all. You may be poor and hard-pressed with rigorous necessity of toil:—

“ What then ? Thou art as true a man
As moves the human mass among ;
As much a part of the Great Plan
That with Creation’s dawn began,
As any of the throng.

“ True, wealth thou hast not : ’t is but dust !
Nor place ; uncertain as the wind !
But that thou hast, which, with thy crust
And water, may despise the lust
Of both — a noble mind.

“ With this and passions under ban,
True faith and holy trust in God,
Thou art the peer of any man.
Look up, then — that thy little span
Of life may be well trod ! ”

ORTHODOXY.

GREAT is the truth and mighty above all things. — *Esdras*.

Das erste und letzte, was vom Genie gefordert wird, ist Wahrheitsliebe. — GOETHE.

The study of truth is perpetually joined with the love of virtue; for there's no virtue which derives not its original from truth; as, on the contrary, there is no vice which has not its beginning from a lie. — CASAUBON.

Hold thou the good; define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark and be
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

TENNYSON.

Shall I ask the brave soldier who fights by my side
In the cause of mankind, if our creeds agree?

MOORE.

You will find that it is the modest, not the presumptuous inquirer, who makes a real and safe progress in the discovery of divine truths. One follows Nature and Nature's God — that is, he follows God in His works and in His word. — BOLINGBROKE.

For he was of that stubborn crew
Of errant saints, whom all men grant
To be the true church militant;
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun;
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery;
And prove their doctrines orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks.

BUTLER.

Ueb' immer Treu und Redlichkeit bis an dein kühles Grab,
Und weiche keinen Finger breit von Gottes Wegen ab!
Dann wirst du, wie auf grünen Au'n, durch's Pilgerleben
gehn ;
Dann kannst du sonder Furcht und Grau'n dem Tod in's
Antlitz sehn.

HÖLTY.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the CREED of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought.

TENNYSON.

So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess ;
So let our works and virtues shine
To prove the doctrine all divine.

WATTS.

WHAT is orthodoxy? Few words have been more persistently misunderstood or worse abused than this really noble word. In the popular use of it, its meaning has changed with changes of time and place. Orthodoxy meant one thing on the lips of Origen; another thing in the pages of Augustine; still another in the dusty pedantry of the Schoolmen, and the less worthy dogmatism of sixteenth century Catholicism; and yet another in the sermons of Luther and Calvin; while in our day it means something different from the orthodoxy of the Reformation.

The Saxon Bishop Stigand, in the days of stout but ill-fated King Harold, said:—

“ In our windy world
What 's up is faith, what 's down is heresy.”

An ecclesiastical successor of Stigand's, when asked, “ What is orthodoxy ? ” replied, “ Orthodoxy is my doxy ; heterodoxy is another man's doxy.”¹ Both Stigand and his successor have consistent followers to-day.

As commonly understood by fairly intelligent people, “ orthodoxy ” designates the prevailing belief of evangelical Christians, — namely, the system of related truths that constitutes in substance the teaching of most of the theological seminaries, and has more or less complete expression in the creeds of Protestant Churches.

By some, “ orthodoxy ” is identified with a group of inflexible dogmas that express the hard and repulsive spirit of an exaggerated Calvinism. Still others claim the title of orthodoxy for theological tenets that directly or by implication are opposed to Calvinism. The word often has been prostituted to mere party uses. The Greek Church adopts the distinctive title of “ The Orthodox Church.” The Roman Church makes a like claim in its assumption that all religionists outside of its fold are schismatics or heretics. The Protestant maintains that the title properly belongs to those who accept the

¹ Bishop Warburton to Lord Sandwich.

body of doctrines accordantly held by the great divisions of the Protestant Church. Within each church or denomination there is usually a party that arrogates to itself the peculiar merit of orthodoxy.

Leaving aside all these conflicting and partisan uses — we might better call them abuses — of the word, let us examine into its root-idea, and so arrive, if possible, at a clear and definite conception of its meaning.

Orthodoxy is a compound of the two Greek words ὀρθός and δόξα. Ὀρθός means, (1) “upright,” as a column; (2) “straight,” as a line; (3) “right, true, real,” and, as applied to persons, “righteous, just, steadfast.” Δόξα means, (1) “expectation;” (2) “opinion, sentiment, judgment.” It has other meanings which, however, do not concern us now.

These two words are compounded in a verb which we find in Aristotle, ὀρθοδοξέω, which means “to have a right opinion.” Thence we have, in the early days of Christianity when the theological tendency began to develop in the Church, the word ὀρθόδοξος, which means “right in opinion, sound in faith.” This compound does not occur in the New Testament, but ὀρθός does, and also δόξα, though in its derivative sense of “honor, glory, praise.”

Etymologically, then, the meaning of orthodoxy is right or true opinion or judgment. Cleared of abuses, orthodoxy is simply right thinking, thinking according to what is right or true. Intrinsically it is as applicable to opinions on art or politics as it is to religious beliefs, though we seldom hear of an orthodox art-critic, and never of an orthodox politician.

But universal usage has given to this word a distinctively religious or theological sense. Orthodoxy, therefore, means right thinking as to religion in its broad sense. Broadly conceived, religion includes both faith and morals, — that is, it comprehends our moral relations to God and our moral relations to men. He is orthodox who thinks rightly on faith and on conduct.

Now, orthodoxy has been much used as if it were in itself an absolute principle. To say that an opinion is orthodox is, with many, to end discussion and inquiry. But this is a misuse of the term; orthodoxy is merely relative. Right thinking implies a standard according to which thinking is just and true. There is always, of course, among intelligent people, the tacit assumption of a standard. It may be a particular creed or symbol, as the Westminster Confession, or the Thirty-Nine Articles of the

Anglican Church, or the Apostles' Creed; or indeed, it may be the Koran, or the sacred books of Buddhism. The member of a sect finds his standard in the accepted symbol of his sect; but right thinking is not a matter of sect or party. What is true is true; it cannot be true for one man and false for another man. Is there any standard of right thinking with reference to man's highest concerns, — his faith and his duty? If there is, then that is the standard of orthodoxy. I cannot here go into a discussion of the ultimate basis of authority in religion; nor need I do that, except in the most general way. A sufficient standard of religious belief and practice can be found only in a veritable revelation of God, for God is the source of truth as well as of law. There are not two standards, one of orthodoxy and one of righteousness; belief and conduct are not separable, save in thought, for moral truth and moral law are in essence one. Both express the one nature which is absolutely good, and is, therefore, the ground of all true belief and the spring of all right action. Apart from the being and nature of God, there can be neither truth nor righteousness. Our commonest moral principles have a theistic basis. The standard that we seek is found in the Bible.

The scriptures of the Old and New Testaments assume to give an adequate revelation of the nature and will of God in His relations to humanity. Christendom accepts the Bible as peculiarly the Word of God. This position the Bible securely holds, not as deriving its authority from some theory of inspiration, but as being what it is, — a book full of deity and humanity. Many people have striven with much ingenuity and persistence to discredit the Bible as the authority in religion and morals. Fastening upon certain features and elements of this composite work, they have even denied that it contains a true expression of God's relation to man. That such efforts have failed needs no demonstration here; their main result has been to stimulate such study of the Bible as has made more and more clear to the world that here, and especially in the chief personality which it presents, is a spiritual communication that authenticates itself as divine both to the reason and to the heart of mankind. It is the glory of Protestantism, and the secret of its crescent triumph, that it has grappled with the fundamental question of religious authority, and has, I will not say exalted the Bible, but, in some measure, has recognized and enounced its true significance

to the world as a revelation of the divine in terms and conditions of the human. In promoting, sometimes by destructive, but more often by constructive methods, a clear understanding and a rational interpretation of the Bible, Protestantism has rendered an immeasurable service to the world.

It is apparent that before answering the question: What is orthodoxy? it is necessary to answer the preliminary question: What is the true standard of belief as to the nature of God and his purposes toward man? That question is answered for us by the Bible. I assume that you believe the essential message of the Bible; for, before you can reject that message intelligently and honestly, you must have destroyed its authority by proving it false.

I do not mean that you must have found that the Biblical history is not infallible; it does not assume to be infallible. Nor do I mean that you must have found records of facts and events that belong to the realm of myth and legend, and, especially in the earlier books of the Bible, expressions of defective morals and wrong ideas of God; nor do I mean that you must have demonstrated that long-current opinions as to the authorship and date and structure of certain books are erroneous, — all this

you may do without touching the main question of the Bible as a source of divine authority in religion and morals; but I mean that you must have invalidated the spiritual communications which have their culminating and unique expression in the life and character and teachings of Jesus Christ. This, I take for granted, you have not done.

Accepting the Bible, especially the New Testament, as giving a true account of man's relation to God, and a true expression of God's goodwill toward man, we have an adequate, at least the highest attainable, objective standard of religious thinking and believing. It is not an arbitrary rule of faith, for it appeals to reason before it commands assent. The true conception of orthodoxy, then, is, that it is the correspondence of our ideas with the thoughts of God as those find fullest and purest expression in the Christian Scriptures.

Of course the thoughts of God which are discoverable by us are not confined to the Bible; but for the clearest and most spiritual knowledge of the divine nature and purpose we are dependent on the revelation of which the Bible is the pre-eminent vehicle. This is true whether we consider the Biblical writings as products of express divine dictation or of a

spiritual evolution of humanity under a divine impulse. The Bible gives us a knowledge different both in kind and in degree from the knowledge afforded by Nature.

Besides, the Biblical point of view is interpretative; it gives the clew to our spiritual nature and relations. Mainly history itself, the Bible furnishes the key to the history of the race; it opens, too, the meaning of the material universe. In it is spoken that word of God which gives us insight into the deeper significance of the works of God.

The devout and earnest mind, instructed in the divine thought which the Bible contains, sees higher and sweeter meanings than science alone has ever discovered, in the hieroglyphs that shine on the wide scroll of earthly landscape and starry sky. Faith discovers in sun and rock and animal and plant, not that which contradicts science, but that which makes science itself worth while.

Orthodoxy, then, is not primarily, nor, perhaps, even at all, correspondence of opinion with a specific creed or system of theology. Every creed is but the precipitated thought on religion of some man, or school of men, or several generations of men, put into propositional and logical form, — that is, a creed, while

it may be a very great and a very sacred thing, is, after all, but a human, and consequently fallible, interpretation of truth. It is therefore incorrect to pronounce any one orthodox or heterodox because his belief corresponds or fails to correspond with a certain creed. That creed is itself always on trial; it has its standard and justification, not in itself, but in the ground on which it rests. The Word of God, in the Bible but not identical with the Bible, is the true standard of belief. Apart from that Word the creeds of the Church, the decisions of councils, and the exhortations and anathemas of all time are without authority and force; and claims of orthodoxy and charges of heterodoxy alike are impertinent if not absurd.

The standard of orthodoxy is, then, the revelation of God's nature and His will toward man which is given us in the sacred Scriptures, and especially in the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. In other words, the standard of orthodoxy is the Bible, taken on its highest plane of spiritual communication.

If we accept the Bible as our standard of belief, it would seem to be an easy task to determine what doctrines are true and what are false, — that is, what doctrines are orthodox.

But we are confronted with a difficulty, and that difficulty inheres in the superficial, or irrational, or partisan, way in which many view the Bible.

It is a common, but intellectually vicious, fault that men come to the Bible with pre-formed opinions which they proceed to import into the Bible; or they look at it from a single angle of vision, from which they see only one aspect of its truth, and hence are incapable of viewing that truth in its large proportions and manifold relations. The Bible must be taken not as the product of a mechanical dictation for dogmatic purposes, but as a vital and progressive expression of the divine life and thought in human terms and through forms of human experience. God is in, not outside of, human history. He is in the experience of prophets and peoples, making for Himself ever clearer and more spiritual expression, until in the Christ, "the fulness of the Godhead bodily" appears reconciling the world to Himself. How great a book is the Bible thus simply and largely taken! It reveals God; it makes articulate His love and wisdom. In the person of Christ and the wonderful story of his human life of toil and suffering and beautiful beneficence, it brings God near to us, and in

some effective way comprehensible to our hearts. It gives us life as the guide of life; it demonstrates the divine mercy by the record of deeds that perpetually feed the springs of human charity, and keep hope alive in the heart of the world; and it exhibits the divine ideal of human righteousness in a character and a life which forever invite and inspire imitation, and forever rebuke our sins and shame our follies, and turn us back from ourselves to the power and grace of God for hope of salvation.

The Bible not only presents to us truths to be believed, but also a righteousness to be achieved. Its evident aim is the deliverance of humanity from sin by the power of an informing holy life. Of this manifold Scripture Jesus Christ is the central figure. More than any one else in the history of the world he is the ideal man; and he is this because he is the expression of the indwelling deity. In him God is immanent, and so through him God is revealed in a way at once intelligible to our minds and efficacious to our hearts.

The highest communications of the Bible cannot be rightly apprehended by the reason unless they are also received by the heart. Man is saved by loving even more than by

knowing; hence revelation to become a regenerative moral power must be through personality. Faith like love terminates on a person, and not on a proposition. The appeal of the Scriptures to faith in Christ is entirely rational.

If we keep clearly in mind the real nature of faith, we cannot exaggerate its importance. It is only when the personal element is desiccated out of faith that it becomes a dead thing, like the dogmas to which fungus-like it attaches. The Bible certainly demands faith; but the practical side of faith is righteousness, and these are inseparable. "Faith without works is dead." A belief that has not in it a beating heart of pure love is certainly not the Biblical belief. A faith that does not make desire purer, and motive higher, and conduct holier, and character more beautiful with truth and sympathy and charity, cannot be an orthodox faith, though it claim the sanction of innumerable creeds; for orthodoxy means right thinking, and right thinking is only the rational side of right living.

Now, it is only in taking the Bible in this large way, and with a supreme regard to its spirit rather than to its letter, that it is manifestly a sufficient standard and test of orthodoxy; for there are many conflicting doctrines

of theology for which the authority of the Bible is claimed. We are to determine the truth or falsity of beliefs by reference always to the Word of God.

But the Word of God is variously interpreted from a dogmatic point of view, and the result is a great perplexity in many minds. Are we in need of some test additional to the bare letter of Scripture? What shall that test be? Shall it be the traditions of Catholic Christianity? They are often but the precipitated fancies of fallible, and almost always superstitious, men. Shall it be the *dicta* of an "infallible" pope? Dependence on these is a confession of helplessness and despair. Shall it be the concurrent thought of the devout scholars of a country or an age? August and weighty as this must ever be, it is but a body of opinions that are subjected to fresh trial by every advance in critical knowledge. Whatever help they may afford us in the way of instruction or stimulus to thought, their value is chiefly historical, and they are not adequate to our need. The Christian consciousness of the historic Church, quickened and made wise by that spirit whom Christ promised to his followers, with the assurance, "He shall guide you into all the truth," is a stronger safeguard

against error in the interpretation of the Bible, and a surer guide in the art of right living, than any objective standard can be. The common, conventional orthodoxy denies the validity of the Christian consciousness, and, in its dependence on infallible dogma, practically denies any real function to the Holy Spirit.

But besides the Christian consciousness, which manifestly is subject to constant tuition and growth, is there any test of truth which is accessible to all, and which, in its simplicity and effectiveness authenticates itself to the sincere mind?

The test needed is furnished in the influence of doctrines on life; in the words of Christ, applicable as well to principles and beliefs as to men: "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Religious beliefs can never rightly be matters of mere curious speculation; they are important only as they have entered into the blood of an individual or a generation, and thus become formative forces in character. Indeed they are not properly beliefs unless they have thus entered into the mental and moral life of men. They are *true* only as they conform not merely to the letter but to the spirit of God's Word; and their conformity to the spirit of that Word may be surely tested by the results

which they actually produce in character and deeds; for doctrines, I repeat, like men, are known by their fruits.

Here, then, is a practical test of orthodoxy which the Bible itself indicates, and which to the perplexed but ingenuous mind is beyond price. It is presumable at the outset that beliefs having fairly and fully the sanction of the Sacred Scriptures, are wholly good in their influence on conduct and character; beliefs and doctrines do not exist for their own sake. The end of all doctrines is life. Truth is realized in being. Orthodoxy is infinitely desirable because correspondence of belief with the thought of God has its ultimate result in correspondence of character with the nature of God.

In testing doctrines by their practical results on a large scale, we need an historical perspective, — that is to say, the doctrines themselves must have been held in the minds and hearts of men long enough to work out their legitimate consequences. Keeping in mind the principle that the Bible, rightly understood, must soundly and beneficently affect life, must make men better in all their relations, we may safely affirm that if a religious belief, whether claiming Biblical sanction or not, has an evil effect

upon life; if it makes men selfish and cruel; if it breaks down self-restraint and induces immorality; if it degrades life by violating those relations which have their centre in the home; if it cramps the mind or corrupts the heart and perverts the conduct, — then one of two inferences is inescapable: either (1) the belief is based on a misinterpretation or a perversion of God's Word, and hence, though ostensibly Scriptural, is really unscriptural and false; or (2) the belief is in direct and obvious antagonism to God's Word, and by that fact is condemned as untrue. Escape from both of these inferences is impossible.

It is true even of the best of men that conduct only approximates perfect correspondence with their best thoughts. No man, perhaps, lives as well as he knows. A true religious belief embodies an ideal of life which is not yet realized; but in the long lapse of time the character of the aggregate life reveals the truth or falsity of the beliefs which have moulded that life. Hence the importance, not only to the theologian but to all inquiring minds, of a wide knowledge of historic life.

Many examples might readily be drawn from history which impressively illustrate this principle. Jesuitism as a system of doctrines stands

condemned before the bar of an unperverted conscience by its results. Many individual doctrines which have been held by professed adherents of Christianity cannot abide the judgment of experience. If Calvinism, which for three centuries has exerted so powerful an influence on the thinking of Christendom, can be shown to work ill effects on human character and conduct, just in proportion to those ill effects must Calvinism be condemned. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that Calvinism, in spite of certain exaggerations and absurdities, has produced great strength of character and purity of life, by so much must it be approved as a body of religious doctrine. The same is true of every specific doctrine. A man is not orthodox because he is a Calvinist, nor heterodox because he is a Socinian; he is orthodox or heterodox according as his regulative beliefs work good or ill to character. Nothing is so orthodox as the resolute maintenance of righteousness; nothing is so heterodox as the practice of sin.

The general principle that the effects of belief justify or condemn the belief may be applied in a limited measure to individual life, but not with as certain results as when applied to men in the mass. An individual

may be a hypocrite; he may become almost unconsciously a hypocrite. Tennyson's words are not mere hyperbole when he characterizes some one as

“So false he partly took himself for true.”

But a generation or an age cannot be, either consciously or unconsciously, hypocritical. It may be ignorant and superstitious and mistaken, but it will not really believe one thing and act another. Time strips away all masks. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he; and men in the mass are sure to work out their convictions in conduct. Mankind may hold false beliefs through a long period of time, but those beliefs will really be held, and the life of that period will truly accord with those beliefs.

Given, then, the perspective — allow sufficient time for beliefs to embody themselves in the character and literature and work of a people — and the result is a test of orthodoxy as infallible as is possible to man.

Obviously it is untrue that it does not matter what a man believes as long as he is sincere; for the more sincere he is in a false belief, the more surely will that false belief appear in practical living. Nor is it any evi-

dence against the vital importance of true doctrine that some good men hold false doctrines. There are such anomalies as individual men who are better than their creed; but the tendency, persistent and inevitable, of creed is to shape conduct, and a wrong creed will, ere long, surely produce wrong conduct. The Master said, "Take heed how ye hear." Saint Paul the apostle said: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." These words are for the present generation. Departure from truth will inevitably be followed, if it is not accompanied, by departure from righteousness.

Belief and life are inseparable. Belief makes life; life tests belief. As the world grows older, systems of religious belief are undergoing a trial which, while it puts upon them the seal of truth or the brand of error, ever throws clearer light on the Holy Bible, and ever more completely demonstrates its fitness to lead the thoughts and mould the lives of men.

In thus making life the test of orthodoxy, do we degrade the Sacred Scriptures as the supreme authority in matters of faith and practice? No; for it is the agreement or disagreement of beliefs with the essential message of those Scriptures which life reveals. A bad life finds no justification or defence in the

Bible. Do we cast doubt or contempt on the promised aid of the Holy Spirit in the discovery and verification of truth? No; for it is in the faithful exercise of reason, and the diligent use of all rational means, that the promise of divine guidance is fulfilled to the honest and the devout.

Young men, seek to be orthodox, — that is, seek, not the accord of your opinions with some system of theology considered as an ultimate rule of belief, but the agreement of your thought with the thought of God. To this end I commend you to the holy Jesus as the best teacher and exemplar of orthodoxy, and to that spirit of reverence and humility and sincere teachableness which is the best qualification for learning life's highest lessons. Remember that religious beliefs, in order to have any real significance and value, must be positive and vital; they must take hold of spiritual realities, and they must take hold of *you*; and they must be wrought out into conduct. Be assured that a holy life is the best evidence of substantial orthodoxy. A life lived daily unto God, a life of pure and generous deeds, a life of cheerfulness and patience and sympathy, not only reveals belief, it also verifies belief; nay, more, it reacts upon belief,

ever bringing it, and with it the believing heart, into closer conformity with the will and purpose of God.

“ Think truly, and thy thought
Shall the world's famine feed ;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed ;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.”

THE END.

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